

Risk Management Policy

Signhills Academy



Approved by:

Full Governing Body

Date: Summer 2026

Next review due by:

Summer 2027

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Our Commitment

Signhills Academy is committed to effective risk management as an integral part of our governance and operational management. This policy sets out our approach to identifying, assessing, managing, and monitoring risks that could affect our ability to achieve our strategic objectives and provide excellent education for our pupils.

1.2 Purpose of this Policy

This policy:

- Defines our approach to risk management across all areas of school operations
- Establishes clear roles and responsibilities for risk management
- Sets out our risk appetite and tolerance levels
- Describes the processes for identifying, assessing, and managing risks
- Ensures compliance with our legal and regulatory obligations
- Provides a framework for consistent decision-making

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All governors and trustees
 - The headteacher and senior leadership team
 - All staff members
 - Volunteers and contractors working on behalf of the school
 - All areas of school operation, including educational, financial, operational, and reputational risks
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2. Risk Management Framework

2.1 What is Risk?

Risk is the possibility that an event or action will adversely affect our ability to achieve our objectives. Risk has two components:

- **Likelihood:** The probability that the risk will occur
- **Impact:** The consequences if the risk does occur

2.2 Our Risk Management Approach

We adopt a proactive approach to risk management that:

- Embeds risk management in our day-to-day operations and decision-making
- Balances risk-taking with appropriate controls
- Encourages innovation while protecting what matters most
- Ensures proportionate responses to identified risks
- Promotes a culture of risk awareness throughout the school

2.3 Risk Management Objectives

Our risk management framework aims to:

- Protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of pupils, staff, and visitors
- Safeguard the school's assets, reputation, and financial stability
- Support the achievement of our strategic objectives
- Ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements
- Enable informed decision-making at all levels
- Provide assurance to governors, parents, and stakeholders
- Promote continuous improvement in our operations

3. Risk Appetite Statement

3.1 Our Risk Appetite

Signhills Academy's risk appetite varies according to the nature of the risk and the potential impact on our pupils and operations. Our risk appetite by area is:

Area	Risk Appetite Level	Description
Safeguarding and Child Protection	Minimal	No compromise on safeguarding standards; all decisions must prioritise pupil safety
Health and Safety	Minimal to Cautious	Pupil and staff safety is paramount; activities with inherent risks must be properly managed
Educational Quality and Curriculum	Moderate to Open	We will innovate in teaching and learning, adopting evidence-based practices that offer significant benefits
Financial Management	Cautious	We will maintain financial stability and reserves whilst investing strategically
Compliance and Governance	Minimal	Full compliance with all statutory requirements is essential
Staffing and HR	Cautious to Moderate	We will recruit high-quality staff whilst managing employment risks appropriately
Reputation and Stakeholder Relations	Cautious to Moderate	We will protect our reputation whilst being willing to lead and innovate
Digital and IT	Cautious to Moderate	We will embrace technology whilst protecting data security and online safety

3.2 Risk Appetite Levels Defined

- **Minimal:** Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is paramount
- **Cautious:** Preference for safe options with low residual risk
- **Moderate:** Willing to consider options with higher risk for greater reward
- **Open:** Eager to take well-managed risks for significant potential benefits

3.3 Applying Risk Appetite

All decisions should be assessed against our risk appetite. Where a proposed action falls outside our stated risk appetite, it must be escalated to the headteacher or governing body for consideration.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governing Body

The governing body has overall responsibility for risk management and will:

- Approve this risk management policy and the risk appetite statement
- Review and approve the strategic risk register at least termly
- Monitor the effectiveness of risk management arrangements
- Ensure adequate resources are allocated to risk management
- Review significant risks and incidents
- Challenge management on risk-related decisions
- Maintaining the school's risk register and ensuring it is regularly reviewed
- Approve risk management training for governors and staff
- Commission internal or external reviews of risk management as appropriate

4.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy and embedding risk management in school operations
- Reporting significant risks to the governing body
- Ensuring staff understand and apply the risk management framework
- Leading the identification and assessment of strategic and operational risks
- Ensuring appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place
- Escalating risks that exceed the school's risk appetite
- Promoting a positive risk management culture
- Ensuring compliance with statutory risk assessment requirements

4.3 Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

Each member of the SLT is responsible for:

- Identifying and managing risks within their area of responsibility
- Implementing and monitoring risk mitigation measures
- Reporting significant risks to the headteacher
- Ensuring staff in their areas understand risk management responsibilities
- Supporting staff in completing risk assessments
- Monitor compliance with risk management procedures
- Coordinate risk management training
- Keep abreast of risk management best practice

4.4 All Staff

All staff members are responsible for:

- Understanding and applying this policy in their day-to-day work
- Identifying and reporting risks and hazards promptly
- Completing risk assessments as required for their activities
- Following established procedures and control measures
- Participating in risk management training
- Contributing to a culture of risk awareness
- Raising concerns about risks that are not being adequately managed

5. Risk Management Process

5.1 Risk Identification

We will identify risks through:

- Regular risk assessment exercises
- Strategic planning and review processes
- Monitoring of performance data and key indicators
- Internal and external audits
- Incident and near-miss reporting
- Staff consultations and feedback
- Governing body discussions
- Consultation with external partners (e.g., local authority, other schools, H&S Advisor, DPO)

5.2 Risk Assessment

For each identified risk, we will assess:

Likelihood (probability of occurrence):

1. **Rare:** May occur only in exceptional circumstances (less than 10% chance)
2. **Unlikely:** Could occur at some time (10-40% chance)
3. **Possible:** Might occur at some time (40-60% chance)
4. **Likely:** Will probably occur in most circumstances (60-90% chance)
5. **Almost Certain:** Expected to occur in most circumstances (more than 90% chance)

Impact (consequences if the risk occurs):

1. **Insignificant:** Minimal impact; easily managed
2. **Minor:** Some impact; manageable with existing resources
3. **Moderate:** Noticeable impact; requires additional resources or management attention
4. **Major:** Significant impact; substantial resources required; may affect strategic objectives
5. **Catastrophic:** Severe impact; threatens the school's ability to operate; may require external intervention

Risk Rating = Likelihood × Impact

Risk Score	Rating	Action Required
1-4	Low	Monitor; routine procedures adequate
5-9	Medium	Manage; specific control measures required
10-15	High	Urgent action; senior management attention required
16-25	Critical	Immediate action; governing body involvement required

5.3 Risk Response

For each assessed risk, we will determine the appropriate response:

Accept: Where the risk is within our risk appetite and the cost of mitigation would exceed the benefit, we may accept the risk and monitor it.

Mitigate: We will implement control measures to reduce the likelihood or impact of the risk to an acceptable level. This is our most common response.

Transfer: We may transfer some risks through insurance, contracts, or partnerships (e.g., insuring against fire damage, using specialist providers for high-risk activities).

Avoid: Where a risk is unacceptable and cannot be adequately mitigated, we will avoid the activity or decision that creates the risk.

5.4 Risk Mitigation and Control Measures

When implementing control measures, we will follow the hierarchy of controls:

1. **Elimination:** Remove the hazard or risk entirely
2. **Substitution:** Replace with a less hazardous alternative
3. **Engineering controls:** Isolate people from the hazard
4. **Administrative controls:** Change the way people work
5. **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Protect individuals exposed to the hazard

We will ensure that:

- Control measures are proportionate to the risk
- Multiple layers of control are used where appropriate
- Control measures are documented and communicated
- Responsibilities for implementing controls are clearly assigned
- Resources are allocated to maintain control measures
- The effectiveness of controls is regularly reviewed

5.5 Risk Monitoring and Review

We will monitor and review risks through:

- **Continuous monitoring:** Day-to-day oversight by staff and senior leaders
 - **Regular reviews:** Formal review of risk registers at governing body committee meetings
 - **Incident reviews:** Analysis of incidents and near-misses to identify lessons learned
 - **Performance monitoring:** Review of key performance indicators that may signal emerging risks
 - **Annual review:** Comprehensive review of the risk management framework and all risk registers
 - **Governing body oversight:** Termly receipt of strategic risks by the full governing body
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6. Risk Register

6.1 Purpose of the Risk Register

The risk register is a living document that records:

- All identified significant risks
- Risk assessments (likelihood, impact, and rating)
- Whether each risk is within our risk appetite
- Existing control measures
- Additional actions required
- Risk owners
- Target risk ratings (after mitigation)
- Review dates

6.2 Types of Risk Registers

We will maintain:

- **Strategic Risk Register:** High-level risks that could affect our strategic objectives, reviewed by the governing body
- **Operational Risk Registers:** Detailed risks in specific areas (e.g., safeguarding, premises, curriculum), maintained by relevant SLT members / governing body committees
- **Project Risk Registers:** Risks associated with specific projects or initiatives

6.3 Risk Register Management

- The governing body committees will maintain the central strategic risk register
- SLT members will maintain operational risk registers
- Risk registers will be reviewed at least termly and updated as circumstances change
- New risks will be added promptly when identified
- Risks that are no longer relevant will be archived (not deleted) for future reference
- The strategic risk register will be presented to the full governing body termly

7. Specific Risk Assessment Requirements

7.1 Statutory Risk Assessments

We will ensure compliance with all statutory risk assessment requirements, including:

Health and Safety Risk Assessments: General workplace risk assessments covering all significant hazards in the school environment.

Fire Risk Assessment: A comprehensive assessment of fire risks, reviewed regularly, with a fire safety and evacuation plan and records of fire drills.

COSHH Risk Assessment: Assessments of risks from hazardous substances used in the school.

Cyber Risk Assessment: Assessments of risk from Cyber threats.

Asbestos Management: An asbestos register and management plan setting out how we manage asbestos risks.

Legionella Risk Assessment: Assessment of risks from water systems, with a written control scheme if required.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments: For staff who regularly use computers.

Manual Handling Risk Assessments: Where staff are required to lift or move heavy items.

Prevent Duty Risk Assessment: Assessment of the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism, based on a shared understanding with partners of the potential risk in the local area, demonstrating an understanding of the national threat picture, a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people, a specific understanding of local risks and the potential impact on our setting or pupils, and a proportionate response to the level of threat and risk.

Other Specific Risk Assessments: As required for specific activities, equipment, or circumstances (e.g., educational visits, use of reasonable force, lone working, violence and aggression).

7.2 Educational Visits Risk Assessments

We will carry out specific risk assessments for trips that pose a higher level of risk. Routine visits that carry no more than an everyday level of risk will be covered by our current policies and procedures. Higher risk could be related to things such as distance from school, type of activity, location, or need for staff with specialist skills. Examples of higher-risk trips include going abroad and adventure activities such as caving, climbing, trekking and watersports.

7.3 Risk Assessment Process

All risk assessments must:

- Be completed by a competent person who understands the risks involved
- Identify all significant hazards
- Assess who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and determine control measures
- Record the findings and implement control measures
- Review and update regularly or when circumstances change
- Be communicated to all relevant staff

Staff should receive training on how to complete risk assessments effectively, understanding the principles of good risk assessment and how to write a risk assessment when needed.

8. Incident and Near-Miss Reporting

8.1 Reporting Requirements

All staff must report:

- **Incidents:** Events that have caused harm or damage
- **Near-misses:** Events that could have caused harm but did not
- **Hazards:** Conditions or situations that could lead to harm

8.2 Reporting Process

Staff should:

1. Take immediate action to make the situation safe
2. Provide first aid or emergency assistance as required
3. Report the incident/near-miss to a member of the SLT or the Business Manager as soon as possible
4. Complete an incident report form (available from the Business Manager)
5. Cooperate with any investigation

8.3 Investigation and Learning

The school will:

- Investigate all significant incidents and near-misses
- Identify root causes and contributing factors
- Determine whether existing risk assessments and controls were adequate
- Implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence
- Share lessons learned with staff
- Update risk registers and risk assessments as necessary
- Report to the governing body as appropriate

8.4 RIDDOR Reporting

We will comply with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR), reporting to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) when required.

9. Risk Management Culture

9.1 Promoting Risk Awareness

We will promote a positive risk management culture by:

- Leading by example from the top
- Encouraging open discussion of risks and concerns
- Recognising and acknowledging good risk management practice
- Avoiding blame culture; focusing on learning and improvement
- Providing adequate resources for risk management
- Ensuring risk management is integrated into all activities
- Communicating clearly about risks and control measures

9.2 Training and Development

We will ensure that:

- All staff receive induction training on risk management
- Specific training is provided for those with risk management responsibilities
- Governors receive training on their risk oversight role
- Regular refresher training is provided
- Staff are competent to complete risk assessments in their areas

9.3 Communication

We will communicate about risk management through:

- Staff meetings and briefings
 - Governing body meetings
 - Written communications
 - Training sessions
 - The school website (where appropriate)
 - Consultation with parents and pupils (where appropriate)
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10. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Financial Procedures Manual
- Educational Visits Policy
- Behaviour Policy

- Accessibility Plan
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Emergency and Critical Incident Plan
 - All statutory risk assessments
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11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 Policy Review

This policy will be:

- Reviewed annually by the headteacher
- Approved by the governing body
- Reviewed sooner if there are significant changes in legislation, guidance, or school circumstances

11.2 Effectiveness Monitoring

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Regular review of risk registers
- Analysis of incident and near-miss reports
- Internal and external audit findings
- Feedback from staff, governors, and stakeholders
- Compliance with statutory requirements
- Achievement of strategic objectives
- Benchmarking against other schools

11.3 Reporting to Governors

The governing body will receive:

- Termly updates on strategic risks
- Annual reports on risk management effectiveness
- Reports on significant incidents
- Updates on compliance with statutory risk assessment requirements
- Information on risk management training completed

12. Appendices

Appendix A: Risk Assessment Template

GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

COMPANY	Signhills Academy	REFERENCE NUMBER	
		EMPLOYEE GROUP	
		TASK	
		PREMISES	
ASSESSORS NAME		DATE	
ASSESSMENT SUMMARY			
SIGNIFICANT RISKS REQUIRING ACTION		PERSONS AT RISK	ACTION REQUIRED
SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS			
OTHER RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS			
ASSESSORS SIGNATURE			

HAZARD TYPE	DESCRIPTION OF HAZARD	LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURRENCE	PROBABLE SEVERITY	RISK RATING	EXISTING CONTROLS / COMMENTS AND FURTHER ACTION

Appendix B: Risk Register

Risk Categories

Use these categories to classify risks:

- **Safeguarding** – Risks to pupil welfare and safety
- **Health & Safety** – Physical safety risks
- **Educational Quality** – Risks affecting teaching, learning, and outcomes
- **Financial** – Financial sustainability and management risks
- **Compliance** – Regulatory and legal compliance risks
- **Staffing/HR** – Recruitment, retention, and employment risks
- **Reputational** – Risks to school reputation and stakeholder relations
- **Operational** – Day-to-day operational risks
- **Strategic** – Risks affecting strategic objectives
- **IT/Digital** – Technology, data, and cybersecurity risks

Appendix C: Risk Matrix

Likelihood Scale

Rating	Level	Description	Probability
5	Almost Certain	Expected to occur in most circumstances	>90% chance
4	Likely	Will probably occur in most circumstances	60-90% chance
3	Possible	Might occur at some time	40-60% chance
2	Unlikely	Could occur at some time	10-40% chance
1	Rare	May occur only in exceptional circumstances	<10% chance

Impact Scale

Rating	Level	Description	Examples
5	Catastrophic	Severe impact threatening the school's ability to operate	• Death or life-changing injury • Major safeguarding failure • School closure • Prosecution • Permanent reputational damage • Financial loss >£100k
4	Major	Significant impact affecting strategic objectives	• Serious injury requiring hospitalisation • Significant safeguarding concern • Major disruption to education • Regulatory intervention • Serious reputational damage • Financial loss £50-100k
3	Moderate	Noticeable impact requiring additional resources	• Injury requiring medical treatment • Safeguarding concern requiring external referral • Disruption to some activities • Regulatory concern • Local reputational impact • Financial loss £10-50k
2	Minor	Some impact manageable with existing resources	• Minor injury requiring first aid • Internal safeguarding concern • Minor disruption easily resolved • Compliance issue easily rectified • Minimal reputational impact • Financial loss £1-10k

Rating	Level	Description	Examples
1	Insignificant	Minimal impact easily managed	• No injury • No safeguarding concern • No disruption • No compliance issues • No reputational impact • Financial loss <£1k

Risk Score Matrix

	IMPACT				
LIKELIHOOD	1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Catastrophic
5 Almost Certain	5 MEDIUM	10 HIGH	15 HIGH	20 CRITICAL	25 CRITICAL
4 Likely	4 LOW	8 MEDIUM	12 HIGH	16 CRITICAL	20 CRITICAL
3 Possible	3 LOW	6 MEDIUM	9 MEDIUM	12 HIGH	15 HIGH
2 Unlikely	2 LOW	4 LOW	6 MEDIUM	8 MEDIUM	10 HIGH
1 Rare	1 LOW	2 LOW	3 LOW	4 LOW	5 MEDIUM

Risk Ratings and Required Actions

Risk Score	Rating	Colour Code	Description	Action Required
16-25	CRITICAL	Red	Unacceptable risk requiring immediate action	• Immediate action required • Stop activity if necessary • Escalate to Headteacher and Governing Body • Implement emergency controls • Senior management oversight required • Review daily/weekly until reduced
10-15	HIGH	Amber	Significant risk requiring urgent attention	• Urgent action required • Escalate to Headteacher • Implement additional controls promptly • Senior management attention required • Review weekly/monthly • May need to stop activity until controls in place
5-9	MEDIUM	Yellow	Moderate risk requiring management	• Specific control measures required • Management responsibility assigned • Action plan with timescales • Regular monitoring • Review monthly/termly
1-4	LOW	Green	Acceptable risk with routine controls	• Monitor through routine procedures • Existing controls adequate • Standard operating procedures apply • Review termly/annually

Risk Appetite Overlay

When assessing whether a risk is acceptable, consider both the risk score AND the risk appetite for that area:

Area	Risk Appetite	Acceptable Risk Level
Safeguarding & Child Protection	Minimal	Only LOW risks acceptable
Health & Safety	Minimal to Cautious	LOW to MEDIUM risks acceptable with strong controls
Compliance & Governance	Minimal	Only LOW risks acceptable
Financial Management	Cautious	LOW to MEDIUM risks acceptable
Educational Quality	Moderate to Open	LOW to HIGH risks acceptable if well-managed
Staffing & HR	Cautious to Moderate	LOW to MEDIUM risks acceptable
Reputation	Cautious to Moderate	LOW to MEDIUM risks acceptable
Digital & IT	Cautious to Moderate	LOW to MEDIUM risks acceptable

If a risk score exceeds the acceptable level for that area's risk appetite, it must be escalated and additional controls implemented.

Appendix D: Statutory Risk Assessment Checklist

General Health and Safety Risk Assessments

Risk Assessment	Legal Requirement	Owner	Notes/Actions
General Workplace Risk Assessment	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	Site Manager	Covers all significant hazards in school buildings and grounds
Fire Risk Assessment	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	Site Manager	Must be reviewed regularly; action plan in place
Asbestos Management	Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012	Site Manager	Asbestos register maintained; management plan in place

Risk Assessment	Legal Requirement	Owner	Notes/Actions
Legionella Risk Assessment	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 / Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)	Site Manager	Water systems assessed; control scheme in place if required
COSHH Risk Assessments	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002	Site Manager	All hazardous substances assessed (cleaning products, pool chemicals, etc.)
Cyber Risk Assessment	A requirement of RPA arrangements	Head Teacher	Reduction in risk posed by Cyber threats
Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992	Business Manager	For staff who regularly use computers
Manual Handling Risk Assessments	Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992	Site Manager	Where staff lift or move heavy items
Noise Risk Assessment	Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005	Site Manager	If noise levels are significant (e.g., kitchen)
Electrical Safety	Electricity at Work Regulations 1989	Site Manager	PAT testing records; fixed wiring inspection records

Activity-Specific Risk Assessments

Risk Assessment	Legal Requirement	Owner	Notes/Actions
Educational Visits	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	EVC	Generic and trip-specific assessments; higher-risk trips require specific assessments
PE and Sports Activities	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	PE Lead	Equipment checks; activity-specific assessments
Science Activities	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 / COSHH	Science Lead	Experiments and equipment; chemical storage and use
Design & Technology	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	D&T Lead	Tools and equipment; supervision requirements
Food Technology	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 / Food Safety Act 1990	Food Tech Lead	Food hygiene; equipment use; allergen management

Risk Assessment	Legal Requirement	Owner	Notes/Actions
Swimming	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	SPTO	To cover NOP / EOP / STOP

Appendix E: Risk Appetite Statement

1. Purpose of this Statement

This Risk Appetite Statement defines the amount and type of risk that Signhills Academy is willing to accept in pursuit of our strategic objectives. It provides a clear framework for decision-making at all levels of the school and ensures consistency in how we approach risk across different areas of our operations.

Our risk appetite reflects our commitment to:

- Providing an excellent education for our pupils
- Maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding and pupil welfare
- Operating as a financially sustainable and well-managed single academy trust
- Innovating and improving whilst managing risks responsibly
- Complying fully with all statutory and regulatory requirements

2. Our Strategic Context

As a Key Stage 2 single academy trust serving pupils aged 7-11 in Cleethorpes, our strategic priorities are:

1. Educational Excellence: Delivering high-quality teaching and learning that enables every pupil to achieve their potential
2. Safeguarding and Wellbeing: Ensuring every child is safe, happy, and supported to thrive
3. Financial Sustainability: Managing our resources effectively to secure the school's long-term future
4. Community Engagement: Building strong partnerships with parents, the local community, and other schools
5. Continuous Improvement: Developing our staff, systems, and practices to deliver better outcomes

Our risk appetite is calibrated to support these priorities whilst protecting what matters most: the safety, wellbeing, and educational outcomes of our pupils.

3. Risk Appetite Levels

We use four levels to describe our risk appetite, ranging from minimal to open:

Level	Description	Decision-Making Approach
Minimal	Avoidance of risk and uncertainty is paramount. We will only accept risks where we have no choice or where the risk is already at an irreducible minimum.	Highly risk-averse; zero tolerance for failure; maximum controls required
Cautious	Preference for safe and conservative options that have a low degree of inherent risk and only limited potential for reward.	Risk-averse; preference for safe options; strong controls required
Moderate	Willing to consider all options and choose the one most likely to result in successful delivery, while also providing an acceptable level of reward and value for money.	Balanced approach; willing to take managed risks for reasonable rewards
Open	Eager to be innovative and to choose options offering potentially higher rewards, despite greater inherent risk.	Willing to take well-managed risks for significant potential benefits

4. Risk Appetite by Strategic Area

4.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection

Risk Appetite Level: MINIMAL

Our Position: Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, and we must consider at all times what is in the best interests of the child. The safety and wellbeing of our pupils is non-negotiable and takes absolute priority over all other considerations.

What This Means in Practice:

- Zero tolerance for safeguarding failures or shortcuts
- All safeguarding policies and procedures must be followed rigorously without exception
- All staff must understand their safeguarding responsibilities and read at least Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (or Annex A for those who do not work directly with children)
- Safer recruitment processes must be completed in full for every appointment, including volunteers
- Any safeguarding concern, no matter how minor it may seem, must be reported immediately
- We will invest whatever resources are necessary to maintain the highest safeguarding standards
- We will err on the side of caution in any situation where a child's safety could be at risk

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Refusing to proceed with an activity if safeguarding concerns cannot be fully mitigated
- Investing in enhanced DBS checks for all volunteers, even when not legally required
- Reporting concerns to external agencies even when we are uncertain

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Proceeding with an activity without completing required risk assessments
 - Allowing an adult unsupervised access to children without appropriate checks
 - Delaying action on a safeguarding concern to gather more information
 - Compromising on safeguarding standards due to resource constraints
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4.2 Health and Safety**Risk Appetite Level: MINIMAL TO CAUTIOUS**

Our Position: The physical safety of pupils, staff, and visitors is paramount. However, we recognise that education involves some activities that carry inherent risks (such as PE, science experiments, educational visits, and outdoor learning) which, when properly managed, provide valuable learning experiences.

What This Means in Practice:

- All activities must have appropriate risk assessments completed by competent staff
- We will implement robust control measures to reduce risks to the lowest reasonably practicable level
- We will comply fully with all health and safety legislation and guidance
- Staff must receive appropriate training for any activities involving risk
- We will invest in proper equipment, facilities, and maintenance to ensure safety
- We will carry out specific risk assessments for trips that pose a higher level of risk, such as those involving distance from school, type of activity, location, or need for staff with specialist skills
- We will not proceed with activities where risks cannot be adequately controlled

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Proceeding with a residential trip after completing a thorough risk assessment and implementing appropriate controls
- Introducing a new outdoor learning programme with qualified instructors and proper safety equipment
- Allowing pupils to participate in age-appropriate science experiments under supervision
- Investing in upgraded playground equipment that meets current safety standards

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Proceeding with an activity without adequate supervision or safety equipment
 - Using equipment that is damaged or not fit for purpose
 - Allowing unqualified staff to lead high-risk activities
 - Ignoring recommendations from health and safety inspections due to cost
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4.3 Educational Quality and Curriculum

Risk Appetite Level: MODERATE TO OPEN

Our Position: We are committed to providing the best possible education for our pupils and are willing to innovate, experiment, and take calculated risks in pursuit of improved outcomes. We will adopt evidence-based practices and learn from best practice elsewhere, even when this involves some uncertainty.

What This Means in Practice:

- We will pilot new teaching approaches and curriculum models when there is good evidence of potential benefits
- We will invest in professional development to support innovation in teaching and learning
- We will embrace educational technology that enhances learning, even when this requires staff to develop new skills
- We will collaborate with other schools and educational partners to share and develop best practice
- We will evaluate all innovations and be prepared to change course if they are not delivering benefits
- We will involve pupils, parents, and staff in developing and evaluating new approaches

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Introducing a new approach to teaching mathematics based on research evidence
- Piloting a forest school programme for one year group before rolling out more widely
- Investing in new educational technology and providing staff training
- Partnering with another school to develop a shared curriculum project
- Adopting a new assessment system that better tracks pupil progress
- Introducing a new subject or enrichment activity to broaden the curriculum

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Implementing a radical curriculum change without evidence of effectiveness or proper planning
- Adopting an untested approach that could disadvantage pupils' progress
- Making changes that would compromise pupils' ability to meet statutory curriculum requirements
- Proceeding with innovation without adequate resources or staff training

4.4 Financial Management

Risk Appetite Level: CAUTIOUS

Our Position: We will maintain strong financial controls and appropriate reserves to ensure the long-term sustainability of the school. However, we recognise that achieving our educational objectives requires strategic investment, and we are willing to take carefully considered financial risks where these support improved outcomes for pupils.

What This Means in Practice:

- We will maintain reserves at or above the recommended level for our school size
- We will implement robust financial controls and monitoring systems
- All significant expenditure must be properly evaluated and approved
- We will seek value for money in all procurement decisions
- We will invest strategically in staff, resources, and facilities that improve educational outcomes
- We will plan for the medium and long term, not just the current financial year
- We will diversify income streams where appropriate to reduce dependency on core funding
- We will be transparent with governors and stakeholders about our financial position

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Investing in additional teaching staff to reduce class sizes, even if this requires using reserves
- Upgrading IT infrastructure to support digital learning
- Funding staff training and development that will improve teaching quality
- Building reserves gradually to fund a planned building project
- Entering into a multi-year contract for services where this provides better value

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Spending reserves below the minimum recommended level without a clear recovery plan
- Making significant financial commitments without proper due diligence
- Proceeding with expenditure that is not aligned with strategic priorities
- Taking on debt without proper assessment of repayment capacity
- Failing to maintain adequate financial controls and monitoring

4.5 Compliance and Governance

Risk Appetite Level: MINIMAL

Our Position: We will comply fully with all statutory requirements, regulatory frameworks, and our funding agreement. Non-compliance is not acceptable and could jeopardise the school's operation, reputation, and the education of our pupils.

What This Means in Practice:

- We will maintain all statutory policies and ensure they are reviewed and updated as required
- We will meet all reporting and data submission deadlines
- We will comply with employment law, data protection legislation, and all other relevant regulations
- We will implement all statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education
- We will maintain proper governance arrangements with trained and effective governors
- We will be transparent and accountable in all our operations
- We will seek professional advice when needed to ensure compliance
- We will report any compliance breaches immediately and take corrective action

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Implementing new statutory requirements ahead of deadlines
- Investing in training to ensure staff understand compliance requirements
- Seeking legal advice on complex compliance matters
- Maintaining comprehensive records to demonstrate compliance
- Conducting regular compliance audits

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Delaying implementation of statutory requirements
- Taking shortcuts on compliance due to resource constraints
- Failing to maintain required policies or records
- Ignoring professional advice on compliance matters
- Proceeding with actions that breach statutory requirements

4.6 Staffing and Human Resources

Risk Appetite Level: CAUTIOUS TO MODERATE

Our Position: Our staff are our most valuable resource, and we are committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining high-quality professionals. We will take a cautious approach to employment risks and compliance, but are willing to be more flexible and innovative in our approaches to recruitment, retention, and professional development.

What This Means in Practice:

- Safer Recruitment (MINIMAL risk appetite): We will follow all safer recruitment procedures rigorously without exception
- Employment Compliance (CAUTIOUS risk appetite): We will comply with all employment law and maintain proper HR policies and procedures
- Recruitment and Retention (MODERATE risk appetite): We will consider innovative approaches to attract and retain staff, including flexible working, and creative recruitment strategies
- Professional Development (MODERATE risk appetite): We will invest in staff development and be willing to try new approaches to training and support
- Performance Management (CAUTIOUS risk appetite): We will address performance issues fairly and consistently, following proper procedures

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Offering flexible working arrangements to attract high-quality candidates
- Investing in staff wellbeing and support
- Providing enhanced professional development opportunities
- Recruiting creatively (e.g., apprenticeships, career changers) to address recruitment challenges
- Implementing robust performance management processes with proper support

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Compromising on safer recruitment checks to fill a vacancy quickly
- Failing to follow proper procedures in employment matters
- Ignoring performance issues to avoid difficult conversations
- Making employment decisions that breach employment law
- Failing to provide adequate induction and support for new staff

4.7 Reputation and Stakeholder Relations

Risk Appetite Level: CAUTIOUS TO MODERATE

Our Position: We value our reputation in the community and with parents, but we will not allow reputational concerns to prevent us from doing what is right for our pupils. We will be transparent, honest, and proactive in our communications, and willing to lead on issues that matter, even when this involves some reputational risk.

What This Means in Practice:

- We will communicate openly and honestly with parents and the community
- We will address concerns and complaints promptly and fairly
- We will be transparent about our performance, including areas for improvement
- We will engage proactively with stakeholders
- We will be willing to take principled stands on educational issues
- We will build strong partnerships with parents, the community, and other schools
- We will protect our reputation through high-quality provision, not by avoiding difficult issues

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Being transparent about Ofsted outcomes and improvement plans
- Addressing a controversial issue openly rather than avoiding it
- Implementing a new policy that may be unpopular but is in pupils' best interests
- Engaging proactively with parents about a difficult situation
- Leading on a community initiative that aligns with our values

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Covering up or minimising a serious incident to protect reputation
- Making educational decisions based primarily on reputational concerns
- Avoiding necessary actions because they might be unpopular
- Failing to communicate honestly with stakeholders
- Compromising on our values to avoid criticism

4.8 Digital Technology and Information Management

Risk Appetite Level: CAUTIOUS TO MODERATE

Our Position: We recognise the potential of technology to enhance learning and improve operational efficiency, and we are willing to invest in and adopt new technologies. However, we will take a cautious approach to data security, online safety, and privacy, ensuring robust controls are in place.

What This Means in Practice:

- Data Protection and Privacy (MINIMAL risk appetite): We will comply fully with GDPR and data protection legislation, implementing robust controls to protect personal data
- Online Safety (MINIMAL risk appetite): We will prioritise pupils' online safety, implementing appropriate filtering, monitoring, and education
- Cybersecurity (CAUTIOUS risk appetite): We will implement strong cybersecurity measures and respond promptly to any threats
- Educational Technology (MODERATE risk appetite): We will embrace technology that enhances learning, providing proper training and support for staff
- Digital Innovation (MODERATE risk appetite): We will pilot new technologies and digital approaches where these offer clear potential benefits

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Investing in new educational technology with proper evaluation and training
- Implementing enhanced cybersecurity measures beyond minimum requirements
- Adopting cloud-based systems with appropriate security and data protection safeguards
- Providing devices for pupils with robust online safety controls
- Piloting new digital learning platforms with proper evaluation

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Adopting technology without adequate data protection safeguards
- Failing to implement appropriate online safety measures
- Proceeding with digital initiatives without staff training and support
- Ignoring cybersecurity risks or incidents
- Compromising on data protection to enable functionality

4.9 Prevent Duty and Counter-Extremism

Risk Appetite Level: MINIMAL

Our Position: We will assess the risk of pupils being drawn into terrorism based on a shared understanding with partners of the potential risk in the local area, demonstrating an understanding of the national threat picture, a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people, a specific understanding of local risks and the potential impact on our setting or pupils, and a proportionate response to the level of threat and risk.

What This Means in Practice:

- We will complete and regularly review our Prevent risk assessment
- We will ensure all staff receive appropriate Prevent training
- We will work closely with local safeguarding partners, the local authority, and police
- We will respond promptly to any concerns about radicalisation or extremism
- We will build pupils' resilience to radicalisation through our curriculum
- We will take all concerns seriously, even if they seem unlikely in our context

Examples of Decisions Within This Appetite:

- Investing in Prevent training for all staff
- Developing curriculum content that builds critical thinking and resilience
- Working with local partners to understand and respond to local risks
- Referring concerns to Channel when appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and updating our Prevent risk assessment

Examples of Decisions Outside This Appetite:

- Assuming Prevent is not relevant to our school without proper assessment
- Failing to train staff on Prevent responsibilities
- Ignoring or dismissing concerns about radicalisation
- Not working with local partners to understand risks
- Failing to maintain an up-to-date Prevent risk assessment

5. Applying the Risk Appetite Statement

5.1 Decision-Making Framework

When considering any significant decision, initiative, or project, decision-makers should:

1. Identify the relevant risk appetite area(s) – Which area(s) of this statement apply?
2. Assess the risks – What could go wrong? What is the likelihood and potential impact?
3. Check against risk appetite – Is this decision within our stated risk appetite for this area?
4. Consider mitigation – Can risks be reduced to bring the decision within appetite?
5. Evaluate benefits – Do the potential benefits justify the risks?
6. Make the decision – Proceed, proceed with mitigation, or reject
7. Document the rationale – Record why the decision was made and how risk appetite was considered
8. Monitor and review – Track outcomes and learn for future decisions

5.2 Escalation

Decisions that fall outside our stated risk appetite must be escalated:

- Outside appetite in one area: Escalate to Headteacher
- Significantly outside appetite or affecting multiple areas: Escalate to Governing Body
- Affecting safeguarding or compliance: Escalate immediately to Headteacher and Safeguarding Governor / Chair of Governors

5.3 When Risk Appetites Conflict

Sometimes a decision may involve areas with different risk appetites (e.g., educational innovation that also has health and safety implications). In these cases:

- The more cautious risk appetite takes precedence
- Additional controls must be implemented to satisfy the more cautious appetite
- The decision must be escalated if it cannot be brought within all relevant appetites

Example: A proposal for an adventurous outdoor learning programme involves both educational quality (moderate to open appetite) and health and safety (minimal to cautious appetite). The decision must satisfy the health and safety appetite through robust risk assessments, qualified instructors, and proper equipment before the educational benefits can be pursued.

6. Monitoring and Review

6.1 Regular Review

This Risk Appetite Statement will be:

- Reviewed annually by the Headteacher
- Approved annually by the Governing Body
- Reviewed sooner if there are significant changes in circumstances, legislation, or strategic direction

6.2 Monitoring Adherence

We will monitor adherence to this statement through:

- Review of significant decisions and whether they aligned with stated risk appetite
- Analysis of incidents and whether these indicate risk appetite was exceeded
- Feedback from staff, governors, and stakeholders
- Internal and external audit findings
- Review of risk registers and whether risks are within appetite

6.3 Reporting

The Governing Body will consider:

- Strategic risks and whether these are within appetite
- The effectiveness of the risk appetite framework
- Reports on any significant breaches of risk appetite

7. Communication and Embedding

7.1 Communication

This Risk Appetite Statement will be:

- Published on the school website
- Shared with all staff as part of induction and annually
- Discussed with governors as part of their training
- Referenced in relevant policies (e.g., Risk Management Policy, Financial Procedures)
- Used actively in decision-making processes

7.2 Training

We will ensure that:

- All governors understand the risk appetite framework and their role in oversight
- The Headteacher and SLT can apply the framework in decision-making
- All staff understand the school's approach to risk in their areas of work
- Training is provided as part of induction and refreshed regularly

7.3 Culture

We will promote a culture where:

- Risk appetite is seen as enabling good decision-making, not constraining it
- Staff feel empowered to make decisions within appetite and escalate appropriately
- Innovation is encouraged within appropriate risk boundaries
- Learning from both successes and failures is valued
- Open discussion of risks and concerns is welcomed

8. Conclusion

This Risk Appetite Statement reflects Signhills Academy's commitment to:

- Putting pupils' safety, wellbeing, and education first
- Managing risks responsibly and proportionately
- Enabling innovation and improvement within appropriate boundaries
- Making consistent, well-informed decisions
- Being transparent and accountable

By clearly defining our risk appetite, we provide a framework that empowers our staff and governors to make good decisions, supports our strategic objectives, and protects what matters most: the children in our care.