Health, Safety and Risk Management Policy

An overarching group policy for all Polaris Education schools and settings

This policy forms part of the Polaris Quality Management System (ISO 9001) and applies to all companies and settings within the Polaris Community unless a site-specific policy expressly states otherwise.

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Policy owner:	Polaris Education — Health & Safety Compliance Manager
Approved by:	Health & Safety Committee
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Supersedes:	School Health and Safety Policy (v05, July 2025) and the Polaris Education Health and Safety Risk Assessment Policy (v06, 2026–2027), which are consolidated into this document
Status:	This document sets the mandatory group-wide standard. Individual schools and settings must not operate a separate health and safety or risk assessment policy that conflicts with it. Site-specific procedures (e.g. fire strategies, asbestos management plans, water safety schemes, individual pupil risk assessments) sit beneath and must align with this policy.
Associated documents:	Fire Safety Policy and Fire Safety Strategy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy; Medical Needs Policy; Lone Working Policy; Asbestos Management Plan; Legionella / Water Safety Scheme; corporate Risk Assessment Template (POL-HS-RA-TPL-001)

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1. Policy Statement and Statement of Intent

Polaris Education is committed to safeguarding and to quality management, and a robust approach to health and safety sits at the heart of both. We believe that the health, safety and welfare of our pupils, staff, visitors and contractors is of paramount importance.

This policy sets out how Polaris Education and each of its schools and settings will maintain a safe and healthy environment, prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health, and provide adequate control of health and safety risks arising from our activities, so far as is reasonably practicable. It does this by taking responsibility for compliance with our statutory duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) or, where applicable, the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024), and the requirements of Ofsted, the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) and, where relevant, the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

We will achieve our health and safety obligations by:

- Providing adequate training and development for staff to fulfil their obligations in supporting health and safety at work;
- Providing sufficient resources to manage, monitor and carry out checks on our premises to ensure a safe working environment;
- Consulting with our staff on matters that relate to their health and safety;
- Assessing and minimising the hazards and risks arising from our activities, so that pupils can thrive in a healthy and safe environment;
- Ensuring all suppliers, contractors and providers of products and services comply with their obligations and commitments to health and safety in their work with us;
- Ensuring all equipment used by our staff and pupils is fit for purpose and adequately maintained;
- Safely storing hazardous substances and ensuring they are handled appropriately;
- Providing an effective process of communication and supervision for individuals visiting or working on our premises;
- Effectively monitoring, reporting and acting on incidents, accidents, near misses and work-related ill health, to enable actions that mitigate or remove risk;
- Making reasonable adjustments for pupils and staff with a protected characteristic, including disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs, in line with the Equality Act 2010;
- Ensuring we have access to professional and competent health and safety advice to enable us to continually improve our health and safety performance and management.

This policy, and the risk assessments made under it, will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner where circumstances require (see Section 12).

2. Scope and Application

This policy applies to every Polaris Education school unless a site is expressly excluded in writing by the Polaris Leadership Team.

It applies to all employees, agency and supply staff, volunteers, governors, pupils, parents/carers, contractors, and visitors while on Polaris premises, on Polaris business, or engaged in activities organised by a Polaris school (including offsite visits and work experience placements).

Where a setting is also registered as a children's home, or provides regulated health or care activity, this policy operates alongside and does not replace the standards set by the Care Standards Act 2000, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, and any CQC registration conditions applicable to that setting. Where those frameworks impose a higher standard than this policy, the higher standard applies.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

The following primary sources set the standard against which every Polaris policy, procedure and risk assessment is judged. Every Polaris school must be able to defend its arrangements against these standards at HSE, Ofsted, ISI, CQC or insurer inspection.

Source	What it requires of Polaris
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, ss.2 & 3	The founding duty. Polaris must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees (s.2), and must not expose non-employees — pupils, contractors, visitors, members of the public — to risks to their health and safety (s.3).
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, reg 3	The duty to make a "suitable and sufficient" written assessment of risk to employees and others, reviewed when circumstances change or when it is no longer valid.
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) (England), Part 3	Paragraph 11: a written health and safety policy must be drawn up and effectively implemented. Paragraph 12: compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Paragraph 13: a written first aid policy, administered in a timely and competent manner. Paragraph 14: pupils are properly supervised through appropriate deployment of staff. Paragraph 16: a written risk assessment policy is drawn up and effectively implemented, covering activities on and off the school premises, and appropriate action is taken to reduce identified risks.
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) (England), Part 5	Premises and accommodation standards (School Premises (England) Regulations 2012), including toilet and washing facilities, medical accommodation, and the health, safety and welfare of pupils on the premises so far as is reasonably practicable.
Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024, Part 3, para 8	Equivalent Welsh standard: a written risk assessment policy covering on- and off-site activities, with appropriate action taken to reduce identified risks. Applies to any Polaris setting registered in Wales.
DfE – Independent School Standards: Guidance for independent schools	Non-statutory DfE guidance on how proprietors are expected to meet the Part 3 and Part 5 standards; taken into account by Ofsted/ISI inspectors when reporting on compliance.
DfE – Health and safety: advice for schools	Non-statutory DfE advice, applicable to independent schools, on health and safety obligations, roles and typical arrangements. Used alongside HSE guidance as the reference standard for school-sector practice.
Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	Requires a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment, a nominated "Responsible Person", and the general fire precautions set out in the Fire Safety Policy and Fire Safety Strategy.

Source	What it requires of Polaris
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR); HSE EDIS1 – Incident reporting in schools	The statutory reporting threshold — fatality, specified injury, over-7-day incapacity, dangerous occurrence, or a non-employee taken directly to hospital — and the schools-specific guide on applying it.
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)	Duty to assess and control exposure to hazardous substances, and to keep certain exposure records (e.g. asbestos, legionella) for 40 years.
Equality Act 2010, s.20	The anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments. Polaris settings cannot assess risk to a SEND cohort as though it were a mainstream cohort — elevated vulnerability and individual need must be reflected in risk assessments and in the premises, equipment and staffing provided.
SEND Code of Practice 2015 (0 to 25 years)	Statutory guidance underpinning individual pupil planning (EHC plans, SEN support); informs the content of individual pupil risk assessments and behaviour support plans.
Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992; Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998; Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998; Electricity at Work Regulations 1989	Equipment- and task-specific duties covering manual handling, safe work equipment, lifting equipment, and electrical safety, all captured within site risk assessments and inspection regimes.
Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012; Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998; Approved Code of Practice L8 / HSG274 (Legionella)	Premises-specific duties on asbestos management, gas appliance safety, and control of legionella bacteria in water systems, delivered through the Estates programme (Section 8).
Working at Height Regulations 2005	Duty to avoid work at height where possible and, where it cannot be avoided, to use the right equipment and ensure it is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people.
ACOP L21 – Management of Health and Safety at Work	Sets out what “suitable and sufficient” means in practice, and the hierarchy of control (eliminate, substitute, engineering, administrative, PPE) applied throughout Section 7.
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)	Statutory safeguarding guidance. Where a health and safety incident, near miss or unsafe practice also raises a safeguarding concern, it must be reported under both this policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy — the two are complementary, not alternatives.

4. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Hazard	A danger, or something with the potential to cause harm, associated with the activity, area or equipment being assessed.
Likelihood	The chance of a hazard causing harm, scored 1 (rare) to 5 (almost certain) — see Section 7.4.
Severity	Also called consequence: the level of harm, injury or disruption that could result if the hazard is not controlled effectively, scored 1 (negligible) to 5 (catastrophic).
Control measure	A measure already in place, or proposed, to reduce the likelihood or severity of harm from a hazard.
Significant finding / significant risk	A hazard, and the control measures needed to address it, that is important enough for staff to know about and act on; the serious potential result if a hazard is not controlled effectively.
Residual risk	The level of risk that remains after existing and proposed control measures are applied.
ALARP	As Low as Reasonably Practicable — the legal standard set by the HSWA 1974: not “no risk”, but risk reduced to the point where further reduction would be grossly disproportionate to the benefit gained.
Site Responsible Person (SRP)	The person with day-to-day responsibility for health and safety at a Polaris site — typically the Headteacher, Registered Manager or Service Manager.
Duty holder	The Polaris Leadership Team, who hold ultimate legal responsibility for health and safety across the organisation.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Polaris Leadership Team - Polaris Health and Safety Lead (Duty holder)

- Holds ultimate legal responsibility for health and safety across Polaris Education.
- Approves this policy and its version updates and resources it adequately.
- Receives the annual health and safety assurance report, including the risk assessment position across the estate.
- Is escalated any Very High rated risk and any RIDDOR-reportable incident without delay.

5.2 Health & Safety Committee

- Consists of Proprietary Body.
- Monitors and reviews this policy and its supporting arrangements as and when necessary, and at least annually.
- Considers reports from external auditors and inspectors, changes in regulation or legislation, and implements safe systems of work where needed.
- Draws on professional health and safety advice from a competent external consultant where required.

5.3 Health & Safety Compliance Manager

- Reviews this policy on behalf of Polaris Education and keeps it current with legislation and guidance.
- Provides and maintains the corporate Risk Assessment Template (POL-HS-RA-TPL-001) and updates it as required.
- Countersigns every risk assessment rated High or Very High before the activity proceeds or resumes.
- Maintains the central register of Polaris risk assessments and the group incident portal.
- Provides training and support to Site Responsible Persons and Assessors.

5.4 Site Responsible Person (Headteacher)

- Holds overall day-to-day responsibility for health and safety arrangements at their site, and in their absence delegates this to a named deputy or leader in charge.
- Ensures every activity, area and piece of equipment at the site has a current, suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- Signs every risk assessment as being in operation at the site and escalates any High or Very High rated assessment to the H&S Compliance Manager before the activity proceeds.
- Reviews every risk assessment at least annually and after any incident, near miss or material change (see Section 7.6).
- Ensures every relevant staff member has read, understood and signed the risk assessments applicable to their role, and that significant findings are brought to their attention.
- Assesses staff training needs and identifies minimum health and safety competencies for the site, including first aiders and fire wardens.

5.5 Caretaker / Estates and Premises Staff

- Carry out regular safety inspections, discuss the findings with the Site Responsible Person, and complete weekly checks of the premises for damage and state of repair.
- Maintain records of statutory testing and servicing (fire, gas, electrical, water, security systems).

5.6 Assessor

- Any competent Polaris employee may act as an Assessor. Competence is judged against the activity being assessed — technical activities require a technically competent Assessor.
- Drafts the risk assessment on the corporate template, consults staff working in the area, and reviews any incident or near-miss history before signing it and passing it to the Site Responsible Person for approval.

5.7 All Staff and Employees

- Co-operate to achieve a healthy and safe environment and take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- Read and follow the risk assessments applicable to their role, and use the control measures they set out.
- Report any health and safety concern, incident, near miss, dangerous occurrence or control failure to the Site Responsible Person without delay and suggest improvements to controls.

5.8 Contractors and Visitors

- Comply with this policy and any site-specific induction while on Polaris premises.
- Contractors work to their own previously submitted risk assessments and method statements, and ensure tools and materials are never accessible to pupils.

6. Management Arrangements

6.1 Communication and Consultation

Two-way communication of health and safety information is encouraged at every level. Health and safety are a standing agenda item at staff meetings, where the Site Responsible Person informs staff of any issues or amendments, and staff are encouraged to raise concerns. Staff are consulted on matters that relate to their own health and safety before decisions are made.

6.2 Information and Instruction

Information relating to health, safety and the environment is conveyed to staff, pupils and visitors who may be affected via:

- Notices on notice boards and signage
- Email and written briefings
- One-to-one conversations and induction
- Staff and team meetings

Any staff member who is concerned that the information they have received is inadequate to maintain their own or others' safety should raise this with the Site Responsible Person.

6.3 Monitoring and Audit

Monitoring is conducted through:

- Checking and inspection of equipment and premises
- Auditing for compliance with health and safety procedures and legislation
- Identifying opportunities to improve procedures or health and safety performance
- Maintaining records that provide evidence of these activities

Items monitored include but are not limited to: fire alarm and emergency lighting tests; fire extinguisher servicing; intruder alarm and access control systems; portable appliance testing (PAT); gas safety; asbestos management; water temperatures and outlet flushing; air-conditioning; accident and incident performance; and inspection of the health and safety KPIs set by the Health & Safety Committee.

6.4 Training

In addition to induction training, the Site Responsible Person arranges for staff to undertake other health and safety related training where this is deemed necessary. The Site Responsible Person assesses staff training needs and identifies minimum health and safety competencies for the site, including for first aiders, fire wardens, and staff who support pupils with medical needs or additional vulnerabilities. The H&S Compliance Manager provides training and support to Site Responsible Persons and Assessors.

7. Risk Assessment Framework

7.1 What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a written record of the significant hazards arising from an activity, area or piece of equipment; the persons at risk; the likelihood and severity of harm occurring; the controls in place to prevent or reduce that harm; and any further action required to reduce residual risk to As Low as Reasonably Practicable (ALARP).

This policy is based on the HSE's Five Steps to Risk Assessment (INDG163):

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
4. Record your findings and implement them
5. Review your assessment and update it if necessary

7.2 When is a Risk Assessment Required?

- Before any new activity, process, area or piece of equipment is first used at a Polaris site.
- Whenever an existing activity, process, area or piece of equipment materially changes — for example new plant, a new occupancy pattern, a new cohort, or an altered layout.
- After any incident, near miss or dangerous occurrence that reveals a gap in existing controls.
- When a change of cohort, staffing or occupancy alters who is at risk — for example a new pupil with a known medical or behavioural need, a change of Site Responsible Person, or a change of contractor.
- When a new legal requirement, HSE Approved Code of Practice or industry standard is issued that materially affects the activity.
- As a minimum, every existing risk assessment is reviewed at least annually.

Should a member of staff wish to conduct an activity that is not already covered by a risk assessment held by their setting, but which may pose a significant risk, they must complete a risk assessment on the corporate template, following the guidance in this policy, before the activity takes place. It must be signed off by the Site Responsible Person before proceeding.

7.3 Individual Pupil Risk Assessments

Because Polaris settings support pupils with SEND, medical needs and additional vulnerabilities, a generic activity risk assessment is not sufficient on its own. Where a pupil's needs materially change the risk of an activity, area or piece of equipment — for example due to a medical condition, sensory need, mobility need, or behaviour that challenges — an individual pupil risk assessment must be completed in addition to the generic assessment, reflecting the anticipatory reasonable-adjustment duty in the Equality Act 2010, s.20, and informed by the pupil's EHC plan or SEN support arrangements under the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Individual pupil risk assessments are reviewed at least termly, and immediately after any incident involving that pupil.

7.4 Risk Rating — 5×5 Matrix

Every hazard is scored on Likelihood × Severity, giving a numerical risk rating from 1 to 25 and a coloured band. This is the industry-standard 5×5 matrix used by HSE and the majority of local authorities.

Likelihood scale (L)

Score	Likelihood	Description
1	**Rare**	May occur only in exceptional circumstances — no known occurrence at this or a similar site.
2	**Unlikely**	Could occur at some time but not expected — less than once every 5 years.
3	**Possible**	Might occur at some time — once every 1–5 years.
4	**Likely**	Will probably occur in most circumstances — several times a year.
5	**Almost certain**	Expected to occur in most circumstances — several times a month or more.

Severity scale (S)

Score	Severity	Description
1	**Negligible**	No injury or ill health. No property or reputational damage. No time off work.
2	**Minor**	First aid required. Minor injury or ill health. Up to 3 days off work.
3	**Moderate**	Medical treatment required. More than 3 but fewer than 7 consecutive days off work (potentially RIDDOR-reportable). Minor property damage.
4	**Major**	Serious injury — hospital admission, over-7-day absence (RIDDOR reportable), specified injury such as fracture, amputation, loss of sight. Significant property damage.
5	**Catastrophic**	Fatality; multiple serious injuries; permanent disability; major property loss; regulatory prosecution.

The 5×5 matrix (Risk = L × S)

L ↓ / S →	1 Negligible	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Catastrophic
5 Almost certain	**5**	**10**	**15**	**20**	**25**
4 Likely	**4**	**8**	**12**	**16**	**20**
3 Possible	**3**	**6**	**9**	**12**	**15**
2 Unlikely	**2**	**4**	**6**	**8**	**10**
1 Rare	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Risk bands and required response

Score	Band	Required response	Approver
1–4	**LOW**	Existing controls sufficient. Monitor. Review annually or on change.	Site Responsible Person
5–9	**MEDIUM**	Additional controls where reasonably practicable to reduce risk to ALARP. Review at least annually.	Site Responsible Person
10–15	**HIGH**	Additional controls required. Time-bound action plan with named owner and target date. Do not start or continue the activity until controls are in place. Review termly.	Site Responsible Person AND H&S Compliance Manager
16–25	**VERY HIGH**	Stop or restrict the activity immediately. Escalate to Duty holder representative (Director of Operations / Polaris Leadership Team). Do not resume until risk is reduced to High or below and countersigned.	Duty holder representative AND H&S Compliance Manager

ALARP — As Low as Reasonably Practicable

The legal test set by the HSWA 1974 and repeatedly upheld in case law (Edwards v National Coal Board [1949]), is not "no risk". It is "as low as reasonably practicable". A control is reasonably practicable if the cost, time and effort of implementing it is proportionate to the risk it prevents. If a control is cheap, easy and would reduce the risk, it is reasonably practicable and must be implemented. If the only way to eliminate a residual risk is grossly disproportionate to the harm avoided, ALARP has been reached.

The Site Responsible Person is expected to document why ALARP has been reached wherever residual risk remains Medium or higher after controls are applied.

7.5 Hierarchy of Control

When identifying controls, Polaris follows the hierarchy of control set out in ACOP L21 §37. Controls are considered in order from most effective to least effective. PPE is the last line of defence, not the first.

#	Level	Example
1	**Eliminate the hazard**	Remove the substance, equipment or activity entirely. Always the first option and, where reasonably practicable, must be preferred.
2	**Substitute**	Replace with something less hazardous — a lower-strength chemical, a different piece of equipment, a different process.
3	**Engineering controls**	Physical measures that separate people from the hazard — guards, barriers, ventilation, isolation, interlocks.
4	**Administrative controls**	Systems of work — procedures, training, permits, signage, supervision, cadence of inspection.
5	**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**	The last line of defence, not the first. Used to reduce residual risk that cannot be reduced by levels 1–4.

7.6 Recording, Approval, Review and Retention

Recording

Every Polaris risk assessment is recorded on the corporate Risk Assessment Template (POL-HS-RA-TPL-001). Site-specific formats are superseded by this template. It captures each hazard on a single row with initial risk (before controls), the controls in place, residual risk (after controls) and any further actions required to reach ALARP.

Approval

Every risk assessment is signed by the Assessor and by the Site Responsible Person. Further approvals are required based on the residual risk rating:

Residual risk band	Additional approver required
LOW (1–4)	None. Site Responsible Person signature is sufficient.
MEDIUM (5–9)	None. Site Responsible Person signature is sufficient. A copy is provided to the H&S Compliance Manager for the corporate library.
HIGH (10–15)	H&S Compliance Manager countersigns before the activity proceeds. Time-bound action plan with named owner and target date required.
VERY HIGH (16–25)	H&S Compliance Manager countersigns before the activity resumes. The activity is stopped or restricted until risk is reduced to High or below.

Review

Every Polaris risk assessment is reviewed:

- At least annually, by the Site Responsible Person, with the review recorded in the review log at the foot of the risk assessment;
- Termly for any risk assessment rated High;
- Immediately after any incident, near miss, dangerous occurrence, cohort change or material change to the activity, area or equipment;
- Whenever a new legal requirement, HSE Approved Code of Practice or industry standard is issued that affects the activity.

If a review identifies material changes, the H&S Compliance Manager is notified, and the risk assessment is re-issued with an updated version. Superseded versions are retained for the retention period below.

Retention

Risk assessments are retained for 5 years from the date the activity, area or equipment ceases to exist, or 6 years from the date of last known exposure — whichever is later. Records relating to COSHH-controlled exposures (asbestos, legionella, chemicals) are retained for 40 years under COSHH 2002, reg 10.

8. Premises and Operational Arrangements

8.1 Incident, Accident and Near-Miss Reporting

All accidents are recorded and monitored on the Company's Incident Portal. Parents and carers are notified of any serious injury or any injury to the face or head. Any hazard or near-miss incident is reported to the Site Responsible Person and added to the Incident Portal.

Where an incident meets the RIDDOR 2013 threshold — a fatality, specified injury, over-7-day incapacity, dangerous occurrence, or a non-employee taken directly to hospital — it is reported via RIDDOR in line with HSE guide EDIS1 (Incident reporting in schools). The incident is reviewed and kept updated on the Portal until the staff member has returned to full fitness.

8.2 First Aid- see First Aid Policy

First aid boxes are available at designated points across each site, and equipment is available in the medical room where one exists. Adequate numbers of first-aid trained staff are on site at all times, and this is factored into the site's training needs assessment (Section 6.4).

Disposable gloves are available and staff are advised to use them when dealing with bleeding or other bodily fluids. In an emergency an ambulance is called and, wherever possible, the parent or carer accompanies their child; where this is not possible, the child is accompanied by a member of staff until they can hand over to a parent or carer.

8.3 Fire Safety

All exits are clearly marked and kept clear of obstructions. Fire extinguishers and, where appropriate, fire blankets are provided throughout each site and checked regularly by a competent contractor, with records of visits retained. The fire alarm is tested weekly by the caretaker or a fire warden, and fire drills are completed termly and recorded.

In the event of a fire, staff and pupils follow the site's evacuation procedure to the designated assembly point. Fire wardens are responsible for checking designated areas, including toilets. Further detail is set out in the Fire Safety Policy and Fire Safety Strategy, which are made and reviewed in compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

8.4 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Substances marked as dangerous are not left in classrooms or other pupil-accessible areas. Staff check that manufacturer and safety data sheet instructions are followed when using such substances, and cleaning supplies are kept in a locked cupboard. The Site Responsible Person is informed of any additional potential COSHH item brought into the setting that is not already covered by an existing assessment.

8.5 Electricity and Portable Appliances

Staff visually check equipment before use. Any damage is reported to the caretaker or Estates team, along with the item itself where practicable; where this is not possible, a notice is attached stating the item is faulty and must not be used.

A risk assessment covering electrical safety is carried out annually, and appliances are tested by an external contractor (PAT) with records retained, in line with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. Particular care is taken with extension leads to avoid trailing wires, and leads are never “daisy-chained” together. No electrical equipment is introduced to a Polaris site without the prior agreement of the Site Responsible Person.

8.6 Equipment

All staff are responsible for ensuring equipment is in good working order and stored safely, in line with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 and, for lifting equipment, the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998. Faulty equipment is removed from use immediately and reported to the caretaker or Estates team, with a notice attached stating the item is faulty and must not be used.

8.7 Gas Safety

Gas boilers and appliances are inspected annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer, in line with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Boiler rooms are kept free of combustible materials, subject to regular inspection, and locked at all times except when works are being carried out.

8.8 Water Safety and Legionella

Each site maintains a water safety scheme in line with HSE Approved Code of Practice L8 and guidance HSG274, including regular monitoring of water temperatures and routine flushing of little-used outlets, recorded through the monitoring programme in Section 6.3.

8.9 Asbestos

Where a site's premises may contain asbestos, an asbestos management plan is maintained in line with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, identifying its location and condition and setting out the arrangements for managing it safely, including before any building or maintenance work.

8.10 Health and Hygiene, and Administration of Medicines- See Allergy and Medical Needs Policies

Medicine is not administered except in the case of chronic illness, following discussion with parents or carers, and a medical care plan is then drawn up for that pupil. In general, only inhalers and any medication specified in an individual pupil's medical care plan are kept on site. Children who go home with a medical complaint, or as a result of an accident, are recorded in the office.

Polaris settings operate a no-smoking (and no-vaping) policy within school buildings and grounds. The Site Responsible Person monitors the cleanliness of the building regularly; staff are responsible for maintaining their own areas and for promoting good hygiene habits among pupils, with particular emphasis on handwashing.

8.11 Manual Handling

Where staff are required to move, lift or support pupils or equipment, this is assessed under the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992. Staff who carry out manual handling or physical intervention as part of their role receive appropriate training, reflected in the site's training needs assessment.

8.12 Working at Height

Work at height is avoided wherever possible. Where it cannot be avoided, it is properly planned, carried out by competent people using the right equipment, and supervised, in line with the Working at Height Regulations 2005.

8.13 Offsite and Educational Visits

Offsite visits are a vital part of how we teach and support pupils' development. Every offsite visit is carefully researched, and a preliminary visit is made by the member of staff leading it wherever appropriate. Appropriate risk assessment forms must be completed and approved by the Site Responsible Person before the visit takes place, following the applicable national guidance (e.g. the OEAP National Guidance for outdoor education, learning and off-site visits).

It is the duty of the staff member in charge to ensure all helpers are fully briefed about the visit and the expectations for behaviour. Parental or carer consent is always sought for any extended outdoor education visit that would run longer than the school day.

8.14 Security

All staff and pupils are encouraged to be aware of strangers on the premises. Where a visitor is not known, identification is requested. Visitors are required to enter only at the main entrance and are accompanied while on site. All doors leading outside are secured throughout the day and locked overnight.

8.15 Contractors

All contractors report to the main entrance on arrival and departure. They work to their previously submitted risk assessments and method statements, paying particular attention to tools and materials and ensuring these are never accessible to pupils. Any contractor working in an unsafe manner will be asked to stop work by the Site Responsible Person or caretaker.

9. Policy Review and Governance

This policy is reviewed at least annually by the H&S Compliance Manager on behalf of Polaris Education and approved by the Health & Safety Committee and Polaris Leadership Team. It is reviewed sooner where:

- A new legal requirement, HSE Approved Code of Practice, DfE guidance or Independent School Standard is issued that materially affects this policy;
- An incident, inspection finding, or audit identifies a gap in the arrangements it sets out;
- Polaris's structure, sites or regulated activities change materially.

Individual schools and settings must not maintain a separate health and safety or risk assessment policy. Site-specific procedures made under this policy — fire strategies, asbestos management plans, water safety schemes, and individual risk assessments — must be consistent with it and are subject to the same review and approval requirements set out in Section 7.6.

Review Dates

Date	Version	Summary of Changes Made
October 2026	02	Minor updates to legislation dates and specific policy references.

10. Associated Documents

- Fire Safety Policy and Fire Safety Strategy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Trauma Informed Relationship and Behaviour Policy
- Medical Needs Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Asbestos Management Plan (site-specific)
- Legionella / Water Safety Scheme (site-specific)
- Corporate Risk Assessment Template (POL-HS-RA-TPL-001)