Quick guide: Risk assessment and controls

*This quick guide complements the* [*Risk assessment for COVID-19*](https://temahau.govt.nz/covid-19/advice-schools-and-kura/covid-19-protection-framework-schools-and-kura#risk-assessment-and-planning-for-covid-19) *guidance and is adapted from the* [*Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 practical guide.*](https://assets.education.govt.nz/public/Documents/Ministry/Initiatives/Health-and-safety/Tools/Health-and-Safety-at-Work-Act-2015-practical-guide.pdf)

*It can be used to support your risk assesment and health and safety review.*

**Role of the board as PCBU**

The Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) is usually a legal or corporate entity, including a self-employed person. In a school the PCBU is the board.

As the PCBU, the board holds the primary duty of care to ensure the health and safety of everybody involved with the school “so far as is reasonably practicable”.

The board usually delegates the implementation of health and safety policy to the principal, who develops appropriate procedures and practices to ensure obligations and expectations are met. The board may delegate any of its functions or powers but can never delegate its accountability.

Even if your school already has good health and safety management in place, with the changes to the vaccine mandate and My Vaccine Pass, it is recommended that you review it and ensure that it reinforces an active culture among all those at the school, including ākonga.

A formal risk assessment enables the board to understand what the significant hazards in their school are. More importantly, it helps the board to focus on the significant risks, rather than using their resources trying to manage every risk.

**Managing risks**

Risks must be managed by taking action to eliminate them, and if that is not reasonably practicable, minimising them. Eliminating a hazard will also eliminate any risks associated with that hazard.

* Hazard = a situation or thing with the potential to cause death, injury or illness
* Risk = the likelihood that death, injury or illness might occur when exposed to a hazard

Risk assessment involves considering the **severity of consequences** if a person is exposed to a hazard, combined with the **likelihood** of it happening. The level of risk will increase as the likelihood of injury/illness, or it’s severity, increases.

A risk assessment can help determine:

* how severe a risk is
* whether existing control measures are effective
* what action you should take to control the risk, and
* how urgently the action needs to be taken

**Assessing risks**

The information below can help you to assess the **severity** of the consequences and the **likelihood** of injury or illness occurring, and then to assess the risk for each hazard.

Table

Description automatically generatedNB this content is copied directly as an image from the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 practical guide](https://assets.education.govt.nz/public/Documents/Ministry/Initiatives/Health-and-safety/Tools/Health-and-Safety-at-Work-Act-2015-practical-guide.pdf) (Tool 13 on page 57). Page 50 as noted below, refers to the guidance document.

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**Risk register template**

Refer to the above information to determine Likelihood, Consequence and Risk Rating. The content in *Red* below will not necessarily reflect your own risk setting. **It is an example only.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Risk description | Potential Harm | Consequence | Likelihood | Risk rating | Eliminate, isolate or minimise | Risk controls | Training or information required | Date checked |
| Exposure to Omicron variant of COVID-19 | For the majority of people it will be a mild to moderate illness that can be managed at home. Commonly, children have mild or no symptoms of COVID-19 with a short duration of illness.  The incidence of severe or fatal disease in children is significantly lower than in adults.  A very small proportion of the population are at risk of hospitalisation and for a very small proportion COVID-19 can lead to death. | *Minor to moderate – for majority*  *Major to critical – for those at very high risk of severe illness* | *Likely*  *Rare* | *Medium*  *Medium - High* | *Minimise*  *Minimise* | *See the* [*Risk Assessment guidance*](https://temahau.govt.nz/covid-19/advice-schools-and-kura/covid-19-protection-framework-schools-and-kura#risk-assessment-and-planning-for-covid-19) *for a list of controls that you can implement at the different framework settings. You may already have many of these controls in place at Red under the framework and will have a highly vaccinated staff. For example, in a primary school setting:*   * *Staying away if unwell and getting tested* * *Monitoring for symptoms and asking those unwell to go home* * *Maintaining good ventilation in indoor spaces* * *Good hygiene and cleaning* * *Encouraging and supporting all staff and eligible students to get vaccinated including booster doses* * *Grouping students to minimise spread across different classes* * *Masks required for children, students and staff in years 4 and up, when indoors (unless exempted)* * *Limiting onsite visitors to only those who are essential* * *Limiting large gatherings* * *Holding higher-risk activities outdoors, where possible*   *For children with multiple chronic conditions and staff or children who have an* [*underlying medical condition*](https://covid19.govt.nz/prepare-and-stay-safe/people-at-higher-risk-of-severe-illness-from-covid-19/#who-is-at-higher-risk-of-covid-19) *which puts them at higher risk from COVID-19, and regardless of their own vaccination status:*   * *develop an individual plan to support safety onsite* * *encourage staff to wear a medical-grade mask when indoors regardless of year level (and as required when at Red as noted above)* * *staff working in regular close contact with children/young people at higher risk when indoors, will be required to be vaccinated* * *encourage them to seek advice from GP or other health professional about how to best manage risk* |  | xx/xx/22 |
| Use of poorly ventilated spaces | Exposure to COVID-19 and other airborne illnesses | *Minor to moderate – for majority*  *Major to critical – for those at very high risk of severe illness* | *Likely*  *Rare* | *Medium*  *Medium - High* | Icon  Description automatically generated*Minimise*  *Minimise* | *See the* [*Te Mahau website*](https://temahau.govt.nz/covid-19/advice-schools-and-kura/ventilation-schools) *for further information and support, however depending on your facilities and context, your ventilation risk controls for your school could include:*   * *regularly review the school ventilation plan* * *ventilation is included as a specific item in health and safety briefings with all staff and the Board* * *staff know the signs that indicate a space may not be well-ventilated* * *fortnightly testing of all rooms including staff rooms and office spaces, using portable CO2 monitor – increase to weekly during periods of cold/wet/windy weather for harder to ventilate rooms* * *each room identified as harder to ventilate has a specific plan to manage risk including:* * *open doors and windows as much and for as long as practicable* * *for rooms where windows don’t open - refresh the air in the room during hourly breaks* * *where practicable minimise use of room for higher-risk activities (eg, physical activities, singing, kapa haka)* * *use portable air cleaner (if assessment indicates it is appropriate to do so)* * *where practicable, limit the number of people using the space (no over-crowding)* * *where winter illness and COVID-19 is circulating in the community, require all students and staff in years 4 and above to wear masks, unless otherwise exempted* * *for cold/wet/windy weather days:* * *pre-heat spaces before start of day* * *partially open all windows by 5cm* * *increase indoor heating to compensate* * *for rooms with windows that don’t open – fully open all doors and evacuate the room every hour for 3 – 5 minutes to fully refresh/replace air in room* |  |  |
| Poor lifting technique | Could lead to a back injury |  |  |  |  | * Develop and review policy regularly * Training needs analysis including lifting/manual handling * Identify tasks that require lifting * Seek assistance for heavy lifts * Provide a trolley * Refer to WorkSafe publication, Code of Practice for Manual Handling |  |  |
| Storing and using chemicals  e.g. solvents, paints, fire, fumes, inhalation | Risk of injury, illness or in worst case, death. |  |  |  |  | * Develop and review policy regularly * Replace toxic chemicals with non-toxic substitutes if possible * Store hazardous chemicals in locked cupboard * Use with good ventilation * Comply with The Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996 |  |  |

**Monitor and review**

Once the controls have been implemented, they must be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure they are effective. The relevant school leader is expected to do this in consultation with workers. The regularity will depend on the risk rating.

The principal collates all risk registers on a regular basis for board reporting. The PCBU must consider what is reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters such as the likelihood of, and consequence of harm occurring, and the availability and suitability of ways in which to eliminate or minimise the risks.

**Further information and support**

* [Ventilation in schools | Te Mahau](https://temahau.govt.nz/covid-19/advice-schools-and-kura/ventilation-schools)
* [Risk assessment and planning for COVID-19 | Te Mahau](https://temahau.govt.nz/covid-19/advice-schools-and-kura/covid-19-protection-framework-schools-and-kura#risk-assessment-and-planning-for-covid-19)
* [Reviewing health and safety in schools in COVID times - NZSTA Vimeo](https://vimeo.com/696334411)
* [COVID-19 Protection Framework for schools and kura | Te Mahau](https://temahau.govt.nz/covid-19/advice-schools-and-kura/covid-19-protection-framework-schools-and-kura#covid-19-protection-framework)
* [Health, safety and wellbeing – Education in New Zealand](https://www.education.govt.nz/school/health-safety-and-wellbeing/)

Please contact your regional Te Mahau contact, the New Zealand School Trustees Association or Te Rūnanga Nui if you require further support to manage risk and health and safety in your school.

* [Local Ministry offices – Education in New Zealand](https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/contact-us/regional-ministry-contacts/)
* [New Zealand School Trustees Association](https://www.nzsta.org.nz/)
* [Te Rūnanga nui o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa](https://runanga.co.nz/)