

MATERNITY RISK ASSESSMENT

Issued: February 2017
Reviewed: May 2020
Next Review Due: May 2022

**CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR NEW / EXPECTANT MOTHERS – A GUIDE FOR HEAD
TEACHERS/PRINCIPALS**

Steps to take when conducting a risk assessment for new /expectant mothers

Step 1	Read through the employee or volunteer’s job description
Step 2	Arrange a suitable time to meet with employee or volunteer. In the case of an expectant mother, this should be as soon as possible after you receive written notification of the employee’s pregnancy.
Step 3	Using the guidance on workplace hazards and the risks they pose to new and expectant mothers, assess all aspects of the role with the employee and the risks associated with each of the items listed.
Step 4	Document the findings on the Risk Assessment Form for Maternity-related Risks. The list is not exhaustive and if you identify other risks you should use the blank rows on the form to record them. Make sure a copy of the completed form is kept as a record on the employee’s personal file. Give the employee a copy of the completed form.
Step 5	Take appropriate action where significant risks are identified. Consult your HR Advisor if you need to consider finding alternative work for the employee or volunteer. If you need further advice on identifying or making adaptations for risks identified, contact your HR Advisor or occupational health as appropriate.
Step 6	Review the assessment at appropriate intervals, particularly if there is a change in either the employee’s or volunteer’s circumstances or the work environment and also when the employee returns to work after maternity leave.

Avoiding Exposure of New / Expectant Mothers to Risks in the Workplace

When a hazard has been identified by the risk assessment that could pose a risk to the health and/or safety of a new and/or expectant mother and/or her baby, you will need to consider what action should be taken to ensure the risk is either avoided or, where this is not possible, reduced to the lowest acceptable level.

The options may include: -

- Removing the hazard;
- Removing the employee from the hazard to prevent any exposure to it;
- Reducing or removing the effect of the associated risk.

Examples of Adjustments to avoid or reduce risks

- Temporarily adjusting working hours / working conditions so as to avoid exposure to a risk or reduce the effects of a risk;

- Temporarily assigning some duties to other employees (e.g.: manual handling duties) or providing aids to help with some duties;
- If it is necessary to make adjustments, you should discuss these with the employee and their trade union representative and ask whether she feels the changes are suitable.

Any changes to an existing employment contract – for example, changes in hours, should be agreed with the employee and their trade union representative and then confirmed in writing. Please contact your HR Support Services Team for further advice.

Specific considerations

- Are there clean and comfortable facilities for the employee or volunteer to rest and where appropriate, breastfeed or express and store milk? Is there somewhere that they can lie down, if necessary?
- Has the employee or volunteer been offered extra assistance with lifting for the duration of the pregnancy?
- Has it been identified that the employee or volunteer is at particular risk of assault, either by students or members of the public? If so, have measures been taken to eliminate that risk?
- If there is a possibility that the employee or volunteer has been exposed to the rubella virus, chickenpox, measles or slapped cheek disease (Parvovirus) in the early months of pregnancy, has she been advised to consult her doctor? If the doctor so advises, the employee is entitled to remain absent from the academy on full pay until the danger has passed. Teachers in this situation may, however, be required to teach in another academy where there is no such risk.
- Have arrangements been made for the employee or volunteer to have more frequent toilet breaks, if necessary?
- Have risks associated with farm visits, in particular contact with sheep, been assessed?
- Have particular risks associated with the teaching of PE been addressed?
- Have risks associated with crowded corridors been assessed?
- Where the employee or volunteer is working until shortly before the birth, has the issue of fatigue been addressed, particularly in the context of playground duties, academy visits and after-school meetings?
- Have risks associated with assisting or leading swimming lessons been assessed?

Where adjustments to the role cannot be made

Where it is not possible to make changes that would avoid the risk, or the risk cannot be reduced to an acceptable level, suitable alternative work options should be considered and the employee's trade union representative may be involved..

Where there is no suitable alternative work available, consideration should be given to placing the employee or volunteer on leave as long as necessary to protect her health and safety and/or the health and safety of her baby.

In all circumstances where alternative employment or medical suspension is being considered, you should contact your HR Advisor for advice.

IDENTIFYING WORKPLACE HAZARDS

The following gives a list of some possible workplace hazards and their associated risks, along with suggested suitable avoidance measures. The list is not exhaustive and there may be other hazards to consider. Please contact your HR or Occupational Health Advisor for more information.

Use this form to help you complete the actual risk assessment form.

Hazard	Risk	Avoidance Measure
Shocks, vibration or movement	Regular exposure may increase risk of miscarriage. May be increased risk of premature birth or low birth weight. Breastfeeding mothers are at no greater risk than other workers.	Avoid work likely to involve uncomfortable whole body vibration or where abdomen is exposed to shocks or jolts.
Lifting, moving and handling of loads	Pregnant workers or volunteers are especially at risk as hormonal changes can affect ligaments and postural problems may increase as pregnancy progresses. There are possible risks for those who have recently given birth, especially after a Caesarean section because there are limitations lifting and carrying activities. Breastfeeding mothers are at no greater risk than other workers	Varies according to circumstances. Alter tasks to reduce risks, or address specific needs of the individual or provide aids to reduce risks. Consider assigning some duties to other employees. Offer assistance with lifting.
Noise	No specific risk but prolonged exposure to high noise levels may lead to increased blood pressure and tiredness. There is no evidence of noise affecting who have recently given birth or who are breastfeeding.	Pregnant women should avoid working in noisy environments for prolonged periods.
Ionising Radiation (X Rays etc)	If nursing mothers work with radioactive liquids or dust, these can cause exposure of the child, particularly through contamination of the mother's skin. Significant exposure to ionising radiation can be harmful to the foetus. Also there may be a risk to the foetus from significant amounts of radioactive contamination breathed in or ingested by the mother and transferred across the placenta.	Pregnant women should avoid exposure to ionising radiation where possible.
Non-ionising Electromagnetic Radiation (PC Screens)	Pregnant women are at no greater risk than other workers. Radio frequency radiation (within current recommendations) is not known to cause harm to the foetus or the mother.	Avoidance measures are unlikely to be required.

Hazard	Risk	Avoidance Measure
Extremes of Heat or Cold	When pregnant, women tolerate heat less well and may more readily faint or be liable to heat stress. Breastfeeding may be impaired by dehydration. No specific problems from working in extreme cold.	Avoid exposure to periods of prolonged heat. If a pregnant woman does have to work in a hot environment, rest facilities and access to refreshments should be provided.
Fatigue and Stress	Fatigue is associated with miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight. Excessive physical or mental pressure may cause anxiety, stress and raised blood pressure. Standing for long periods can cause dizziness, faintness and fatigue. It can also increase chances of premature birth or miscarriage. Sitting for long periods increases the chance of thrombosis.	<p>Ensure that hours, volume and pacing of work are not excessive and that, where possible, workers have some control over how their work is organised.</p> <p>Provide seating where appropriate and ensure that the woman is not expected to stand or sit in one position for long periods of time. Provide regular rest breaks.</p> <p>Provide clean and comfortable facilities for rest and, where appropriate, breastfeed or express and store milk. Is there somewhere to lie down?</p> <p>Ensure regular toilet breaks are available.</p> <p>Review playground/break duties, visits, attendance at after school meetings.</p>
Hazardous Substances / infection risks and chemicals	<p>Listeria In pregnant women it may terminate the pregnancy or damage the foetus.</p> <p>Biological Agents eg Hepatitis B, HIV, herpes, tuberculosis, chicken pox, typhoid If infected during pregnancy, the unborn child can be affected. For most workers, the risk of infection is not higher whilst at the academy than in the community although the exposure may be higher in an academy environment.</p> <p>Chemical Agents eg Pesticides, benzene, mercury, lead</p>	<p>Ensure that food and personal hygiene guidance and precautions are provided.</p> <p>Consider hygiene measures or vaccinations. If there is a high risk of exposure to a highly infectious agent, the worker should avoid exposure completely.</p> <p>Please contact Health and Safety if there is likely to be exposure to chemical agents whilst at the Academy.</p> <p>Please contact Health and Safety if there is likely to be exposure to carbon monoxide.</p>

Hazard	Risk	Avoidance Measure
	<p>Organic mercury compounds could have adverse effects on the foetus, slow the growth of the unborn baby, disrupt the nervous system and cause the mother to be poisoned.</p> <p>Carbon Monoxide Carbon monoxide readily crosses the placenta and can result in the foetus being starved of oxygen, both the level and duration of exposure are important factors in assessing the risk.</p>	
Contact with virus	<p>If there is a possibility that the pregnant woman may be exposed to the rubella virus, COVID 19, chickenpox, measles or Slapped Cheek Disease (Parvovirus) in the early months of pregnancy there is the potential for harm to the unborn child.</p>	<p>Early warning where possible. Inform pregnant woman of any outbreaks in the academy. Consult with doctor.</p> <p>Consider redeployment to an academy without the risk,</p>
School trips	<p>Consider risks associated with farm visits, in particular sheep, and swimming trips.</p>	<p>Risk assessments to be undertaken</p>
Ergonomics	<p>Workplace design, layout of workstation and design of work equipment may affect the safety of pregnant workers. Hormonal changes during and shortly after pregnancy can affect ligaments and increase risk of injury.</p>	<p>Consider effects of pregnancy on the body e.g. increase in size/problems with reach/ability to bend or stretch. Regular workstation assessments should be conducted and consideration of any aids required as appropriate.</p> <p>Consider particular risks associated with teaching PE/swimming and carry out risk assessment.</p>
Violence	<p>Potential miscarriage or premature birth.</p>	<p>Risk assessments should be made. Teachers are normally considered to be high risk. Consider restriction to some duties/team working/personal alarms etc as appropriate.</p>



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Hazard	Risk	Avoidance Measure
Working at Heights	Because of the risk of fainting and high blood pressure, it is hazardous for pregnant women to work at heights.	Avoid climbing up and down ladders and stepladders where possible.
Evacuation of Premises	Pregnant women may find it more difficult to evacuate premises due to mobility issues or congestion of exit routes	Re-assess building evacuation procedures for the employee's circumstances. Consider assigning another individual responsibility for assisting a pregnant employee in building evacuation.



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RISK ASSESSMENT - PREGNANCY/UP TO 6 MONTHS FROM RETURN TO WORK/NURSING MOTHER

Employee/volunteer name:

Assessor:

Employee/volunteer is pregnant/during 6 months from RTW/a nursing mother*

Date assessment carried out:

* Delete as applicable

HAZARD/TOPIC	RISK IDENTIFIED	SIGNIFICANT		FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED/NOTES
		YES	NO	
Shocks, vibration or movement				
Lifting, moving and handling of loads				
Noise				
Ionising Radiation (X Rays etc)				
Non-ionising Electromagnetic Radiation (Display Screen Equipment)				
Extremes of Heat or Cold (see guidance https://www.gov.uk/workplace-temperatures)				



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HAZARD/TOPIC	RISK IDENTIFIED	SIGNIFICANT		FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED/NOTES
		YES	NO	
Fatigue and Stress				
Hazardous Substances / infection risks and chemicals				
Ergonomics				
Violence				
Working at Heights				
Evacuation of Premises				

Signed:..... Head Teacher/Principal (or representative)

Signed: (Employee)



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ASSESSOR GUIDANCE NOTES

The risk assessment form should be used as soon as an employee or volunteer tells you that she is pregnant and/or on return to work from maternity leave, particularly where she is breastfeeding. The risk assessment process should be used for employees and volunteers from the date they tell you they are pregnant up until 6 months from the date they return to work or until they stop breastfeeding, whichever is later.

The risk assessment should be reviewed periodically together with the employee or volunteer to ensure that any changes will be noted and actions taken to reduce the risks as appropriate.

To complete the risk assessment – read through each hazard and risk with the employee or volunteer and consider which if any are relevant in relation to her job role. Where any possible hazard and risks are identified, you should consider what adaptations can be made to mitigate as much as possible any risk. For example, Movement/Posture – Long periods of standing – statutory obligation to provide rest facilities – discuss when and how they can be accessed.

Using the guidance sheet will help you in determining whether there is a risk. A copy of this completed form should be retained on the employee's personal file and a copy given to the employee.

If you should experience any problems in carrying out the risk assessment or you want more advice, you should contact your HR or H&S Advisor and in certain cases it may be helpful to involve the trade union representative..