Sussex Catholic Education Trust

Risk Management Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for identifying, assessing, prioritizing, and managing risks associated with our activities. It aims to ensure a systematic and proactive approach to risk management, protecting the charity, its beneficiaries, and stakeholders.

Scope

This policy applies to all trustees, employees, volunteers, and stakeholders involved in our work. It covers all aspects of the charity's operations, including but not limited to programmes, finances, reputational risk, and governance. Where necessary, we will create additional relevant policies, such as systems of internal control, due diligence and health & safety policies.

Charity Commission Guidance

The Charity Commission strongly recommends that charities have a clear risk management policy and process to identify and manage all types of risks and embed risk management into the charity's work.

Risk Management Cycle

Risk is usually managed by means of a cycle of identification, quantification, management and review.

- Identification. Identify the various risks that may materialise.
- Quantifying. Assess and quantify these risks.
- Managing. Take appropriate action to manage these risks. This is usually the weakest area in a risk management framework. Risks can be managed as follows:
    - Avoidance. Action that can be taken to avoid a risk occurring.
    - Mitigation. Action that can be taken to reduce the impact a risk may have, if it occurs.
    - Buying Out. Generally, this is done using insurance.

- Accepting. Risk cannot be eliminated entirely, and any steps taken to manage risk must be reasonable, as resources are not unlimited in terms of money and time. Equally, adopting a purely risk averse approach limits opportunity.

- Reviewing. Risks should be reviewed as regularly as is necessary, depending on their likely probability and impact in the light of changing circumstances. This may be done on an ongoing basis, at appropriate points in projects or at regular meetings.

Responsibilities

The Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that there is an appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise in place and working effectively. The systems of financial control are designed to provide reasonable, but not absolute, assurance against material misstatement or loss. These include:

- a strategic plan and an annual business plan and budget approved by the Board.
- regular consideration by the Board of financial results and variance from budgets.
- delegation of authority and segregation of duties.
- management of risk.

All staff and volunteers have a role in identifying and reporting risks within their respective areas of responsibility.

Risk Identification and Assessment

Risks will be identified through regular risk assessments conducted at least annually.

Identified risks will be assessed based on likelihood and impact to determine the level of risk.

Risks will be categorized as strategic, operational, financial, or compliance related.

Risk Mitigation and Management

Strategies for risk mitigation will be developed for high-priority risks.

Mitigation plans will be assigned to responsible individuals with clear timelines.

Regular monitoring and reporting on the progress of risk mitigation plans will be conducted.

Reporting and Communication

A risk register will be maintained and regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

Key risks and mitigation efforts will be communicated to relevant stakeholders.

In its annual report, the Board will report on the steps it has taken to manage risk, to demonstrate the charity's accountability to its stakeholders including beneficiaries, donors, funders, employees and the general public.

Review and Continuous Improvement

The risk management policy and processes will be reviewed annually or as needed.

Lessons learned from risk events will be used to improve risk management practices.

Training and Awareness

Staff and volunteers will receive training on risk management principles and practices.

Regular communication will be conducted to raise awareness of the importance of risk management.

Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No	Approved By	Approval Date	Main Changes	Review Period
1.0	Board	September 2026	Initial risk assessment	Annually