RISK ASSESSMENT & CRISIS MANAGEMENT POLICY

VERSION CONTROL		
Date	**Description**	**Responsible**
04 June 2013	Created & Approved	Board
31 Aug 2014	Reviewed & Approved	Board
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15 Sep 2019	Reviewed & Approved	Board
13 Nov 2023	Reviewed & Approved	Board
27 Jun 2026	Reviewed & Approved	Board

Next Review Due: **June 2029**

Purpose

EIL/AFS Ireland recognises that our activities expose us to risk and have the potential to negatively impact our staff, participants, volunteers, stakeholders, host families, local coordinators, group leaders, and the success of the organisation. Risk in this policy describes the uncertainty surrounding possible future events that may have a significant impact on any area of the organisation's operations.

The purpose of this policy is to assist the Board and staff of EIL/AFS Ireland in effectively achieving the following objectives:

- Embed full and effective consideration of risk within the planning and management of new and existing activities across the organisation.
- Engage with all relevant stakeholders to identify risks.
- Determine the level of risk for our organisation by considering the likelihood and impact of identified risks.
- Measure risk using a clearly defined rating system on the risk register.
- Manage risk and maintain the risk register to best inform decision making throughout the organisation.

Responsibility

The Board of EIL/AFS Ireland is ultimately responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively across the organisation. The Audit & Risk Committee (ARC), Senior Management Team (SMT) and staff members are expected to support the Board in identifying, assessing and mitigating risks, particularly when they are connected to the operational activity of the organisation.

Role	**Specific Responsibility**
Board	Oversee the review of risks to which the organisation is exposed, and assess the potential likelihood and impact of such risks, should they occur.
ARC	Review any new risk(s)/ change in risk(s) at each ARC meeting. Provide a list of the three current highest risks to the organisation ahead of each Board meeting. Conduct an annual review of the Risk Register and report changes to the Board for approval.
SMT	Review of key management reports, issues and actions at every management meeting. As external events occur or operational challenges arise, discuss and decide on recommendations for the introduction of new risks or amendment of existing risks on the Risk Register. Promote dynamic risk management processes throughout the organisation, encouraging transparent and prompt reporting/ escalation of issues arising.
Staff	Cooperate with the procedures outlined in this policy, and the Board, ARC and SMT in the management of risk. Foster an organisation-wide environment which supports the identification and escalation of risks.

Risk Identification

The Board and staff of EIL/AFS Ireland actively consider potential risks when developing new programmes, reviewing existing programmes or monitoring ongoing activities. The Board works to identify high-level risks to the organisation, while the staff primarily focus on operational risks. Due to the international nature of EIL/AFS Ireland's activities, trends in global geopolitics are monitored alongside national and institutional changes.

When a new risk is identified the following steps are taken:

- The risk is described clearly, and cross-checked against the Risk Register to ensure no duplication or overlap with previously identified risks;
- If there is no duplication or overlap, then a proposal is drafted to add the new risk to the Risk Register.
- The Board reviews the proposal, and decides whether or not the new risk is added to the organisation's Risk Register.

Risk Assessment

When a new risk is identified and added to the Risk Register, it is first categorised into one of the following categories:

- Governance
- Strategic
- Financial
- Compliance
- Operational
- Reputational
- Human Resources

The severity of the risk is then assessed according to the following procedure, assuming no mitigation is present:

1. The likelihood of the risk having a negative impact on the organisation is estimated and given a rating on a scale from 1 to 5.
2. The negative impact that the risk might have on the organisation is then estimated and given a rating on a scale from 1 to 5.
3. The two scores are multiplied by each other, to give a total risk score between 1 and 25.

Likelihood Scoring		**Impact Scoring**		**Risk Scoring**	
5	Almost certain	**5**	Closure of organisation	**21-25**	Extreme risk
4	Likely	**4**	Difficult to recover from	**10-20**	High risk
3	Possible	**3**	Manageable/ Recoverable	**5-9**	Medium risk
2	Unlikely	**2**	Short term impact	**1-4**	Low risk
1	Rare	**1**	Minor impact		

The above procedure is then repeated, accounting for any mitigation currently in place that may reduce the likelihood or impact of the risk.

Items considered 'high risk' with a total score of 10 to 20 post mitigation are monitored closely by the Board and SMT. If a risk is considered 'extreme' with a score of 21-25 post mitigation, the Board and SMT will prioritise finding measures to mitigate the risk as soon as possible, with the aim of reducing the classification of this risk. All risks on the Risk Register are assigned to a specific owner, who is responsible for the relevant mitigation actions.

Risk Mitigation

1. **Operational**

EIL/AFS Ireland's programmes primarily involve international travel, and this comes with many potential risks. In order to mitigate the risks associated with international travel for both the organisation and the participant, we ensure that all programmes involve thorough immersion in the host country, community and culture. This applies whether participants are being hosted in Ireland, or travelling to one of our partner organisations overseas. Thorough immersion ensures participants always have strong support networks to deal with potential risks, with clear contact points that can provide local knowledge and guidance in any situation.

To achieve this, EIL/AFS Ireland:

- Only sends participants to countries where there is a local EIL/AFS Ireland office or other selected partners with personnel on the ground who are experienced in supporting international participants.
- Only places under-18 participants in communities and projects in Ireland where there is a local garda-vetted co-ordinator, host family, mentor and/or group leader.
- Ensures child safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff and volunteers working with children.
- Designs programmes that maximise cultural integration and interchange with local people.
- Requires international partner organisations to have 24/7 emergency contact and support systems in place to deal with any emergencies and crises.
- Has an emergency phone in place to ensure a member of the EIL/AFS Ireland staff team can be contacted at all times.
- Requires international partner organisations to provide orientations or briefings on arrival that address safety issues.
- Provides arrival orientations in Ireland for all inbound participants that address safety issues.
- Conducts pre-departure orientation activities to support and encourage participants to research as much as possible about the destination and culture they will be immersed in.
- Promotes respect as a tool for a successful and safe integration into host communities.

2. **Organisational**

EIL/AFS Ireland is exposed to many risks at an organisational level, due to our charitable status and our work with international partner organisations. In order to mitigate these risks to the organisation, the Board and staff ensure that relevant developments are monitored and reviewed regularly, and steps are taken to reduce exposure to risk whenever possible.

To achieve this, EIL/AFS Ireland:

- Regularly explores opportunities to diversify programmes offerings and income streams, to ensure that the organisation is not overly exposed to risk in one area.
- Monitors national and international policy in areas that may impact our programme activities.
- Monitors national and international political and economic developments that may impact our programme activities.
- Ensures annual compliance with the Charities Governance Code of the Charities Regulator in Ireland.

Crisis Management

EIL/AFS Ireland recognises that in spite of mitigation procedures, crises will occur from time to time. In order to coordinate responses to crises, we operate a 24/7 emergency contact number as well as an emergency response team.

1. **24/7 Emergency Contact Number**

An emergency phone is in place to ensure a member of the EIL/AFS Ireland staff team can be contacted at all times. The staff member on call is empowered to alert any staff members, including the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for child safeguarding issues, local coordinators , mentors and international partners as circumstances require.

2. **Emergency Response Team**

An Emergency Response Team (ERT) responds to any problem or crisis, which involves a risk to the safety of any person associated with EIL/AFS Ireland, either a participant or other individual(s).

The team consists of at least 3 of the following people:

- CEO
- Senior Manager
- Department manager relevant to the issue at hand
- DLP (where there is a concern for child safety)

An ERT is activated when the Programme Manager (or in their absence the most senior staff member available in that department) dealing with a problematic situation or a potentially problematic situation, makes the assessment that there is a risk to safety, or feels the need for assistance in addressing a crisis. The functioning of the ERT is determined by the nature of the emergency at hand. These specific emergencies are split into a series of primary categories:

1. Health Emergencies
    a. General
    b. Outbreak of infectious disease
    c. Serious mental health emergency
2. Legal Emergencies
    a. Crime committed against a programme participant
    b. Crime committed by a programme participant
    c. Abuse of a child or vulnerable adult
    d. Sexual assault
3. Missing Programme Participant
4. Political Emergencies and Natural Disasters
5. Death of a programme participant
6. Death of a programme participant's loved one

These categories of emergency are applicable to all programme areas in EIL/AFS Ireland, and ERTs should be sufficiently flexible to deal with the nuances and unique difficulties faced by the relevant departments.

Risk Monitoring and Review

The ARC is responsible for conducting a thorough annual review of the Risk Register, to remove risks that are no longer relevant, amend the scoring of currently identified risks, and add new risks if necessary. When this review is complete, the updated Risk Register is submitted to the Board for final review and approval.

The ARC also conducts a review of the top 3 current highest risk areas to the organisation at each of its meetings, and provides a report to the Board outlining these high risk areas ahead of each Board meeting.

The SMT is responsible for promoting a culture within the staff team where risks are regularly reviewed and monitored in all operational areas. They support the ARC and the Board by providing regular updates on changes to operational risk areas.

External Risk Reporting

EIL/AFS Ireland is compliant in annually reporting on organisational risks to both the Charities Regulator and an independent external auditor. In order to ensure this, the organisation:

- Reports organisational risks to the Charities Regulator each year as part of compliance with the Charities Governance Code.
- Presents principal risks when preparing annual accounts for an independent external auditor, in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard FRS102.