



Hay Festival 2026 – Programme for Schools Risk Assessments
21st & 22nd May 2026
Hay on Wye, Wales

Event Details

This year's Hay Festival is the 39th year of the annual festival of literature and the arts which takes place on the outskirts of Hay on Wye in Powys, Wales in the United Kingdom. This year's 2026 festival will run across eleven days, between the 21st and 31st of May.

The main festival site is an 11-acre green field site on Brecon Road, featuring various venues. Capacities range from 1,730 to 40. There will also be a food arena, a family area, exhibitor stands, gardens, a bar, coffee shops, a bookshop, box office and various other festival spaces on-site. Some events will occur off-site, including a return to St Mary's Church (170 capacity), as well as parties.

The build for the event will begin at the start of April with the various sign-offs occurring in the run up to 21st May. Break / de-rig will commence on the 1st June and is expected to last no longer than three weeks.

The schools event programme returns this year on the 21st and 22nd May, and will be co-ordinated with the festival's Creative Engagement team. They liaise with schools pre-event, as well as the relevant local authorities and police.

Risk Assessments

A comprehensive risk assessment has been compiled in accordance with Hay Festival's statutory duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999). It also takes into account all other relevant pieces of legislation, regulations, legal precedent and best practice guidance.

Risk Matrix

Each individual hazard is rated for risk, using the system below, along the lines of severity of effects the hazard and the likelihood of the hazard taking place. In each risk assessment the hazard is risk rated before and after control measures have been applied. The residual risk rating is likely to be different from the primary risk rating, due to the expected effect of control measures.

Severity x Probability	5	4	3	2	1
5	25	20	15	10	5
4	20	16	12	8	4
3	15	12	9	6	3
2	10	8	6	4	2
1	5	4	3	2	1

Green = Low risk / Amber = Medium risk, acceptable with adequate control measures / Red = Heightened risk

Severity		Probability	
1	Nil / Negligible	1	Nil / Negligible
2	Slight	2	Remote
3	Moderate	3	Possible
4	Severe	4	Probable
5	High Severity	5	Highly Likely

Schools Visits

	Hazard Area	Who Affected	Hazards	Primary Risk Rating: Probability x Severity			Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating: Probability x Severity			Relevant Manager(s)
				Prob....	Sev...	Rating		Prob....	Sev...	Rating	
1	Potential for insufficient safeguarding of children	Child attendees	Injuries / risk to life to children, Assault to child, Other incidents resulting from safeguarding failure	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various festival staff who are involved in schools visits and all in the Make & Take are to hold DBS clearance • DBS's checked before each festival • Missing / found persons procedures in place, and staff brief on it. • Teachers, staff & volunteers advised of these procedures • Security briefed on safeguarding protocols • Hay Festival retain the right to refuse admission to venues, and site, if required. • Event staff & volunteers in place monitor and feed information back to event management and the schools • Schools informed of their responsibilities towards their students, and have responsibility to ensure appropriate behaviours used whilst on-site • Schools to sign in on arrival to site, and be signed off when they leave. 	1	5	5	Operations Director Creative Engagement Manager Creative Engagement Officer Teachers

2	Missing or found child / vulnerable adult Unattended children	All on site	Injury to child / vulnerable adult Abduction of child / vulnerable person Various effects of person going missing	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key staff in children's area to hold a DBS clearance • Designated point for safe custody • Site wide public address system available for communication to all on-site, if required • Missing / found person procedures in place and briefed to staff, security and volunteer stewards • Teachers / schools advised of these procedures • Schools responsible for their students whilst on-site. • Teachers should not leave any students unattended whilst on-site 	2	2	4	Operations Director Security Manager Teachers
3	Child exiting venue unrestricted or with a stranger	Child attendees	Injury to child Abduction of child Various effects of person going missing	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable ratio of school staff to children required when on-site. • Stewards located by venue exits • Main entry / exit of site main entrance, manned with stewards, briefed to monitor unusual behaviour of children or adults • Staff dealing with children to hold DBS clearance • Designated point for safe custody • Missing / found person procedures in place and briefed to staff 	1	4	4	Operations Director Security Manager Teachers

4	Traffic / pedestrian conflict (School parties leaving site to parked coaches)	Child attendees, All in the area	Risk to life / injury from pedestrian collision with vehicle	4	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staggered and managed egress of schools' parties, if required, so not more than one is egressing through the front gate and attempting to head through the car park at a time. All school children to be accompanied by teachers and adult supervisors when leaving the site School parties to use designated crossing points School parties to use pavements Teachers, adult supervisors, and Hay staff & volunteers to be wearing appropriate hi-visibility jackets when marshaling groups of school children 	2	5	10	Operations Director Creative Engagement Officer
5	Insufficient direction finding information	All on site	Slow down evacuation in emergency Injuries resulting from confusion	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information desk in entrance foyer Information panels and signage on-site Information on website Teachers and schools briefed of event details pre-event Volunteers, staff and security to be made aware of site layout and able to advise visitors 	1	3	3	Operations Director Creative Engagement Manager Creative Engagement Officer

6	Capacities (being exceeded)	All on site	Confusion Slow down evacuation in event of an emergency Injury	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site numbers monitored using electronic footfall counters • Crowd dynamics observed on a regular basis by site management and ESM and changes made where appropriate • Numbers on site restricted by security, if required • All venue capacities identified pre-event • Key staff aware of venue capacities • Most events ticketed • Box Office provides venues with up to date attendance figures, as required • Venue and site capacities monitored by ESM 	1	4	4	Operations Director Event Safety Manager Security Manager Venue Heads
7	Uneven / muddy / boggy ground	All on site	Injury from slips, trips and / or falls Vehicle accidents Damage to property / equipment	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walkways, some covered, in public areas of the site • Separation of areas that are unsuitable for public access • Regular ground and walkway monitoring • Site team on standby and to have appropriate resources to make repairs / remedial action • Signage, where applicable 	1	3	3	Site Manager

8	Falling from height	All working at height	Falling injuries Slips, trips, falls	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stages built to correct methodology • No public access to stages and platforms, unless invited on-stage via backstage route. • Stage to be marked at front • Regular checks to ensure integrity of stage / structures • Stage management to brief performers / speakers, where applicable • Stage management on hand at all times during performances 	1	4	4	Site Manager
9	Slips & trips	All on site	Injuries relating to slips, trips and falls. Damage to equipment	5	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One level walkways with ramps installed in the public areas of the site • Staff briefed on site trip and slip hazards • Any trip hazards to be identified and removed, where possible, or highlighted with tape etc • Lighting in undercover areas • Ongoing site inspection and monitoring of hazards by site management and ESM 	2	3	6	Site Manager Head of Technical Event Safety Manager
10	Children colliding with handrail / barriers	Child attendees	Falling from height / cuts / abrasions Damage to equipment	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct methodology followed during build and dismantling handrails & barriers • Inspection by ESM prior to sign-off • Handrails / barriers at head height (for children or adults) to be signed or marked • Any protruding or potentially dangerous metal or woodwork to be clad with protective lagging • Regular checks by ESM & site management 	1	3	3	Site Manager Stage Manager Contractor

11	Structure collapse - temporary structures	All in the area	Serious injury, Risk to life Damage to equipment	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct methodology followed during build and dismantling structures • All structures signed off by contractor pre-event • Site management, Event Safety Manager and /or contractor standby crew to monitor • Correct weight and loadings on all structures • Wind monitoring procedures in place 	1	5	5	Site Manager Contractor
12	Insufficient cable management	All on site	Slips, trips and falls	5	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High pedestrian flow areas highlighting in site planning and electrics contractor briefed on this • Site design to be considered before event build to minimise issues • Appropriate cable management equipment installed across site • Cables flown, buried, hidden or protected where possible & required • Signed off before opening to public • Regular monitoring of cable routes 	1	3	3	Site Manager
13	Site electrics	All on site	Injury Burns Risk to life Damage to property / equipment	5	5	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All site electrics to be situated either in sterile areas or with suitable cable management in place • All electrics installed by a competent contractor and to industry and legislative standards • Electrical infrastructure not accessible from public areas • Regular systems monitoring • On-site electrician on standby • Staff / volunteers briefed on electrical hazards present in the venues 	1	5	5	Electrical Contractor Operations Director

14	Site art & decorations including HAY signs & plants (build / structural standards / placement)	All in the area	Injuries from objects falling from height Head injury Slips / trips / falls on stage	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-event planning of site art installations including locations, design and build method • Children (and persons of all ages) being on site taken into account during the design and build stages of Site Art • Sign offs required for all site art installations • Use of fit for purpose equipment for site art • Regular inspections of site art to ensure minimal dilapidations during event period 	2	3	6	Operations Director Site Manager Head of Technical
15	Projections blinding public on egress routes	All in venue(s) / vicinity	Vision damage Blinding / dazzling Slips, trips & falls	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-event projections and lighting mapping • Pre-event inspection of lighting in venues • Site lighting / projection techs integrated into technical team • Daily monitoring to ensure no significant changes made • Artists with additional lighting requirements to make tech staff aware of these in advance 	1	3	3	Head of Technical

16	Insufficient lighting across site	All on site	Slips, trips, falls Injuries resulting from Insufficient lighting Damage to property / equipment	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighting systems across site installed by competent and qualified contractors Pre-event site planning and mapping to indicate areas needing to be lit Unsafe steps to be removed / replaced prior to opening to public Additional equipment on site to fill areas identified as additional to site plan Daily checks for blown / missing lamps Use of both installed and temporary lighting systems Site team and contractors able to carry out remedial work throughout event period, if required 	1	4	4	Operations Director Site Manager Head of Technical
17	Breach of stage area by a attendee / child	All in venue	Slips, trips, falls Injuries Confrontation / intimidation	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security on-site Good communication between venues and security Volunteers and stage management staff monitoring in each venue Teachers monitoring children and in venues with them. Zero-tolerance policy for attendees breaching stage areas. Person(s) to be removed from site. 	1	3	3	Security Manager Teachers Stage Manager Venue Head

18	Drug & Alcohol abuse	All on site	Slips, trips, falls Injuries Confrontation / intimidation Damage to property / equipment	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar staff briefed on affects on attendees by excess or adverse alcohol or drugs use • Zero tolerance policy abuse of staff, volunteers, and others on site • Challenge 25 policy in place • All venue staff and volunteers advised of policy and potential hazards • SIA security on-site to remove abusive persons, if required • Liaison with local police and security teams to ensure any intelligence is acted upon • Suitable medical cover on-site • Ejection policy in place for attendees • Bag searches in place at entry, where applicable 	1	4	4	Operations Director Event Safety Manager
19	Poor caterer hygiene	All on site	Illness Injury Pests / vermin	5	4	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable and sufficient hand washing facilities across the site • Signage reminding all guests and staff to regularly wash hands • Daily maintenance of facilities • All caterers briefed and audited pre-event • Regular checks on caterers by Production Supervisor and ESM • ESM and site management to be advised on any issues regarding hygiene immediately to allow remedial works to be carried out • Medical team and facilities on-site 	2	2	4	Operations Director Event Safety Manager Production Supervisor

20	Insufficient hand hygiene	All on site	Illness Infection Disease	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable and sufficient hand washing facilities across the site • Signage reminding all guests and staff to regularly wash hands • Daily maintenance of facilities by sanitary services contractor • Regular checks on caterers by Production Supervisor and ESM • Site management have resources to carry out remedial works to ensure high hygiene standards • Medical team and facilities on-site 	2	2	4	Operations Director Event Safety Manager
21	Food samples Cookery demo events	All in the event / vicinity	Illness Infection Disease	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food sampling events currently planned for schools days • Food hygiene protocols in place for food events. • Those cooking food for events on-site to supply suitable planning and hygiene documentation. • Specialist backstage prep kitchen area for cookery demo & sampling events with suitable equipment and hygiene measures in place. • Suitable equipment used for food events, including preparation and in the venue. • Regular cleaning of all food event equipment and prep kitchen. • Monitoring of food hygiene procedures for food events on-site. • Medical team and facilities on-site 	1	4	4	Event Safety Manager Production Supervisor Operations Director

22	Glass	All on site	Cuts & other injuries from glass Use as weapon Damage to property / equipment	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No glass policy Teachers and schools advised of policy Workers, security and volunteers informed of policies Search policy on entry, where applicable Security on site Regular site cleaning by site team Medical provider on site with provisions to deal with glass related injuries. 	1	5	5	Security Manager Operations Director
23	Crime	All on site	Injury from attack, Damage to property / equipment	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Security provider with suitable cover on site Decent ratio of staff & stewards for amount of attendees present. Close local liaison with police CCTV in operation Staff and volunteers informed to be vigilant 	1	4	4	Operations Director Security Manager
24	Weapons found on-site	All on site	Weapons attack leading to injury / risk to life Damage to property / equipment	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search policy on entry, where applicable Security on-site Crowd observation by security and staff / stewards Liaison with local police Zero tolerance policy on weapons found on-site 	1	5	5	Security Manager Operations Director

25	Insufficient security numbers	All on site	Breach of event site from those hostile to the event Crime Traffic incursion into pedestrian areas	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security contractor employed for duration of the festival • Suitable number of security staff scheduled on duty • Security for overnight periods • Contingency built into security rotas • Site management to support security, where applicable and appropriate • Security Manager in regular consultation with event management team during build, event and break periods 	1	4	4	Security Manager Operations Director
26	Persons opposed to event / artist	All on site	Injury from thrown objects Damage to property / equipment	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with local and national police to assess any specific threats to protest or intelligence of disruption • Pre-defined protest areas in proximity of the event site, if required • Staff briefed of these protest areas and protocols • If protests or opposition is expected event staff & stewards briefed 	1	3	3	Security Manager Operations Director

27	Terrorist & weapons attack	All on site	Major injury Risk to life Mental health effects	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with local and national police to assess any specific threats • Regular monitoring by management, security and consultation with ESM • Event Emergency Management Plan in place • Staff briefed on the emergency procedures pre-event • Staff, stewards and security staff to undertake counter-terrorism training • Zero tolerance policy on weapons found on-site • Bag search on entry, where applicable 	1	5	5	Operations Director Security Manager
28	Children / school parties blocking the concourse	All on site	Blocking of exit routes leading to crushing or other injuries	5	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport dispatch management to prevent congestion in the concourses • All children under the supervision of teachers and appropriate amount adults • All teachers and supervising adults informed of evacuation protocols and routes • Queuing procedures in place to prevent concourses being fully congested • Schools days programmed so only a limited number of other events on site 	3	1	3	Operations Director Security Manager Teachers

29	Insufficient evacuation routes / procedures	All on site	Injury / risk to life due to hindered evacuate the site in the event of an emergency / fire / terrorist attack etc	4	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Emergency Management Plan created specifically for this event including evacuation procedures and routes • These procedures and routes briefed to all relevant staff and volunteers • Routes clearly signposted • ESM to monitor routes • Site and stage management staff and volunteers to ensure exits are kept clear during events 	1	5	5	Operations Director Site Manager
30	Restricted access / egress routes	All on site	Access and egress routes blocked hindering evacuation in event of an emergency / fire	4	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event Emergency Management Plan created specifically for this event including evacuation procedures and routes • These procedures and routes briefed to all relevant staff and volunteers • Routes clearly signposted • Maximum width to be kept clear on all main access / egress routes • Infrastructure to be located off main walkways and access routes • ESM to monitor routes • Site and stage management staff and volunteers to ensure exits are kept clear during events • Fire risk assessment for the event 	1	5	5	Operations Director Site Manager

31	Insufficient welfare facilities	All on site	Illness from insufficient welfare facilities and low hygiene standards	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of sufficient number of fit for purpose toilet facilities for all on-site • Hand wash facilities available at all toilet stations and by kitchen / food areas • Good signage to toilet and welfare facilities • Regular inspection and maintenance of facilities • Clean and drinkable drinking water on-site for all staff • Workers, security and volunteer stewards made aware of welfare facilities 	1	3	3	Operations Director Event Safety Manager
32	Insufficient access to water / drinking water	All on site	Infection Illness Dehydration	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and drinkable drinking water on-site for all staff • Water signed off pre-event to ensure it is potable • Bars able to serve water at all times when event open • Volunteers, staff and security to be aware of attendees with dehydration symptoms • Suitable medical provision available on site with water • Site management & ESM to monitor across site access 	1	3	3	Operations Director Site Manager
33	Insufficient site communication	All on site	Confusion leading to injury or damage to equipment / property	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site wide radio system installed • Mobile phones used as a backup • Workers and volunteers briefed on communication system & procedures • Regularly radio checks to establish and monitor radio coverage • Security, admin, site and venue management teams to be on the same communication system 	1	3	3	Operations Director Site Manager Head of Technical

34	Fire	All on site	Risk to life Major burns Smoke inhalation Minor burns	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific fire risk assessment and plan for the festival • Staff briefed on fire plan for the event • No smoking policy & signage • Combustible materials minimised on-site • Good waste management practices in operation • Site planned to avoid fire risk • Site planned with fire emergency egress routes taken into account • FFE to be installed across the site and in appropriate locations • FFE regularly checked and replaced after use • Appropriate bins and waste disposal on-site 	1	5	5	Operations Director Event Safety Manager
35	Gas	All on site	Explosion Burns Fire	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gas Safe engineer on-site pre-event to check and sign off gas equipment prior to public opening • All staff & caterers briefed on gas hazards on-site and safe procedures • All gas bottles to be stored safely, in accordance with HSE guidance, including being in cages and away from combustible items • Regular inspection of on-site gas by ESM and Production Supervisor 	1	5	5	Operations Director Event Safety Manager Production Supervisor

36	Excessive noise	All in the area	Noise Induced Hearing Loss	5	3	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PA managed by competent sound technicians, experienced with the Hay Festival site • Noise level monitoring in place in each venue for duration of event • Sound maintained at a suitable level for all those on site / in the venue • Minimal use of sound equipment when not required • All stages to have ear protection available 	1	3	3	Head of Technical Event Safety Manager
37	Adverse weather	All on site	Hypothermia Hyperthermia Other illness caused by cold / hot Slips, trips, falls leading to injury Damage to property / equipment	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-event health, safety and welfare planning • Large amount of the site covered by walkways or marquees, signed off to industry standards • Welfare and medical assistance available on site • Wet / waterlogged areas to be cordoned off and restricted • Weather monitoring procedures in place • Venue / site evacuation planned for and staff briefed • Site wide public address system and other ways of distributing information to all on site • Event held in spring / early summer, thus likelihood of weather extremes reduced. 	1	5	5	Operations Director Site Manager

38	Insufficient medical coverage	All on site	Illness Injury Disease Risk to life	4	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable medical cover engaged for the event Event medical centre kitted out with appropriate level of medical equipment Easy communication with 999 Pre-event advice to local ambulance and NHS to advise them event is taking place 	1	5	5	Medical Lead Event Safety Manager Operations Director
39	Child specific illnesses and injuries	Child attendees	Illness Injury Disease Risk to life	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable medical cover and equipment at the event Staff dealing with children to hold DBS clearance Easy communication with 999 Pre-event liaison between schools and the event to pass relevant information on any specific needs of a child. 	1	5	5	Operations Director Teacher(s) Medical Lead
40	Smoking or vaping (Secondary smoke inhalation by minors)	All on site	Illness from secondary smoke inhalation Fire Damage to property and equipment	4	3	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No smoking or vaping policy within venues, and in most public areas of the site. Smoking or vaping staff & volunteers advised of specific smoking areas, away from the environs of the venues Knowledge of the law in the UK regarding smoking in buildings and enclosed spaces is fairly widespread 	1	3	3	Site Manager