



Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust

Health & Safety at Work Policy

Last Updated: 1 May 2024

About this Policy

The Trust is committed to ensuring it complies with its legal duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, and other applicable health and safety legislation. This policy sets out details of the Trust’s working arrangements for creating, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and welcoming environment for its workers, visitors and partner organisations.

Scope

This policy applies to Trust employees, freelancers, contractors, subcontractors, trainees, and volunteers, and throughout this document the word “worker” should be interpreted as meaning to all such individuals.

1. Responsibilities of the Trust

The Trust will comply with its duties to, as far as is reasonably practicable, ensure its workers’ health, safety, and welfare when at work. These duties include:

Keeping dust, fumes, and noise under control.
Ensuring articles and substances are transported, stored, and used safely.
Providing adequate sanitation facilities.
Providing information, instruction, training, and supervision relevant to health and safety.
Controlling dangerous substances in terms of their acquisition and use.
Controlling emissions into the atmosphere from the workplace.
Providing (for free) any protective clothing and/or equipment required by law.
Reporting injuries, diseases, and dangerous occurrences to the relevant authority where required to do so.
Providing adequate first aid facilities.
Taking precautions against fire; providing adequate means of escape and means of fighting fire.
Providing adequate lighting, heating, and ventilation.
Providing a clean workplace that is not overcrowded.
Maintaining washing and toilet facilities.
Ensuring that pathways throughout the Site are well constructed and maintained and not obstructed.
Taking special precautions before allowing workers to enter and work in a confined space.
Ensuring that workers do not have to lift, carry, or move any load so heavy that it is likely to injure them.

Ensuring all equipment and machinery is properly maintained and safe, and that all dangerous parts of machinery are guarded securely.
Seeing that workers are properly trained or under adequate supervision before using dangerous machinery.
Suspending activities on the Site where weather conditions make it unsafe to continue.

2. Responsibilities of Workers

Whether you are a worker, volunteer, or visitor to the site, it is your responsibility to ensure you:

Take care of your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions.
Wear clothing and footwear that is appropriate to the work you will undertake on Site (having regard to weather conditions).
Co operate with the Trust on health and safety matters. Speak up if you notice any shortcomings in the Trust’s health and safety arrangements, even when no immediate danger exists.
Do not forage plants or mushrooms without the approval of the Site manager or community gardener on duty.
Do not misuse anything provided to you by the Trust for your health, safety, or welfare.
Use all work tools and equipment in accordance with the relevant training and instructions.
Do not undertake any work for which you believe you have not been properly trained.

3. Lines of Responsibility

The Site Managers and Designated Safeguarding Leads are set out below. These individuals will aim to ensure that workers are informed of this policy and that they receive adequate training and appropriate information for the work they are required to do.

Forest School Safeguarding Lead	Ingrid Chen
Site Manager	Edward Simpson
Senior Site Manager	Michael Smythe
Board Chair & Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sajida Malik

4. Tool Stores

The Site Managers are responsible for health and safety matters relating to tool stores. The Site Managers will carry out an audit of the tool store each week, ensuring items are in good, safe working order and no items are left unattended about the Nature Reserve.

5. Nature Reserve Events

The Site Manager is responsible for health and safety matters relating to Trust events (on-site and off-site), and for reporting to the Board Chair on all relevant health and safety matters, including the results of safety inspections. Workers will be adequately briefed on relevant Trust policies by the Site Manager before hosting any events or working activities.

6. Implementation

Implementation of this policy and practice is the responsibility of:

- 1) The Trust staff member responsible for a particular reserve or the worker that is leading the relevant activity on the day; or in their absence,
- 2) The volunteer reserve manager(s) or the leader(s) of the visiting external group present and in charge on the day at the relevant location, or in their absence
- 3) The Trust staff member(s) present and in charge of activities on the day at the relevant location, or in their absence
- 4) The local group representative present and in charge on the day at the relevant location.

7. Forest School & Outdoor Learning Activities

The Site Manager and Forest School Lead are responsible for health and safety matters in respect of all outdoor learning activities at the Site and at external locations. Written records will be kept by the Site Manager on all relevant health and safety matters, including the results of safety inspections.

Implementation of this policy and practice in any outdoor learning activity session at the Site or any other location is the responsibility of the most senior member of the Trust team present at the relevant location.

Responsibility for health and safety in respect of activities for children at the Site which are led by the Outdoor Learning Team is set out in the table above.

8. Other Activities by Trust workers at locations not managed by the Trust

Where activities take place on land not managed by the Trust (e.g. a community group helping with the conservation management of a community wildlife garden; education sessions at schools etc.) the Site Manager for the day is responsible for health and safety relating to the project or activity. The Site Manager will comply with the health and safety requirements of the off-site location. Where, in the option of the Site Manager, the Trust's own health and safety procedures offer a greater level of protection than the local off-site procedures, the procedures of the Trust should be followed (e.g., the number of supervisors required for groups of children). A specific risk assessment considering the location and activity will be carried out by the Site Manager before each off-site activity session.

9. Risk Assessments

A risk assessment must always be carried out prior to commencing any project, activity, or event. Existing risk assessments for the Trust-managed sites and regular activities (e.g., volunteer and education sessions, or conservation management tasks) may be used, but must always be reviewed prior to commencing the activity or event to ensure they are suitable.

Special attention should be paid to the circumstances of workers who are (i) under the age of eighteen, (ii) expectant mothers, or (iii) women who have given birth within the past six months or breastfeeding. Activity session leaders must always ask volunteers if they require any access to support and/or have specific injuries that may prevent them from participating. Any such disclosures must be treated as confidential. Risk assessments need to be repeated whenever there is a material change in circumstances. A material change could mean:

- A. Changes in layout of equipment

- B. Observing trends on the accident form
- C. Changes in staff
- D. Introduction of new procedures, processes, or materials

An informal check-in and check-out will take place at each volunteer activity session to allow staff and volunteers to discuss Health & Safety for the specific work required.

10. Training and Induction

We will make all employees and volunteers aware of this policy and will provide initial health and safety information and training as part of our induction.

The health and safety training needs of employees and volunteers shall be reviewed periodically and repeated or updated if necessary (where for example it subsequently becomes apparent that new or increased health and safety risks arise in the course of our work).

If it is necessary to arrange training outside an employee's normal hours, this should be treated as an extension of time at work, with equivalent TOIL (time off in lieu) arranged.

11. Contractors

All contractors (including self-employed individuals) shall comply with this policy and this obligation will form part of each contractor's agreement with the Trust. Contractors must carry out their own risk assessments as required in the course of their work and must provide a copy of such assessments to the Trust.

12. Volunteers

Volunteers shall be treated as staff employees for the purposes of health and safety at work matters and shall be informed of any special qualifications or skills required to work safely.

13. Health and Safety Inspections & Reporting

The Site Manager and Designated Safeguarding Officer shall make regular checks (at least once per year) to ensure that this policy is being implemented in accordance with legal requirements and good practice.

The Site Manager will keep a record of incident reports and annual reports and will provide a health and safety report to the Board as part of an annual review.

Publicly accessible First Aid kits (located in the compost toilet & garden hut) shall be checked on a regular basis to make sure they are stocked up and not tampered with. There is a first aid kit in the education shed reserved for in-house events.

14. Site Inspection Protocol

A thorough Health and Safety inspection of the Site should be carried out at least once every three months. This should include an inspection of mature trees (e.g. for dead-wood), outdoor furniture, and all built structures (e.g. sheds and shelters). When the inspection has been completed, any matters noted as not satisfactory and any other concerns raised by the Site Manager should be reported to the Board.

As required action is taken, the responsible person should initial the form in the appropriate box. Where URGENT action is necessary, the Site Manager is authorized to take immediate reasonable action in response. The inspection report should be preserved in a file maintained for this purpose.

15. First Aid and DBS

All Site staff must be first-aid trained and hold an up-to-date DBS when working at the Site.

The nominated first-aider on duty at the Site will inform working groups of their specific role and responsibilities before any activity session commences.

First Aid Boxes are provided in the following location(s) for use by staff and volunteers:

Medicine Garden Library Hut

Compost Toilet

The Education Shed has a first aid box reserved for events

Staff and volunteers must ensure that any use of the First Aid Box is recorded in the volunteer booklet so that supplies can be topped up as required.

External groups are required to provide their own first aid equipment.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. The Trust will amend this policy, following review, where appropriate.