



Health and Safety Policy

Policy Statement

At The Seeds of Change Ltd, we are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all staff, learners, visitors, and animals. We recognise our responsibility to manage and minimise the risks associated with equine-facilitated learning and ensure compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other relevant legislation.

Health and safety are everyone's responsibility. We promote a proactive safety culture where concerns can be raised freely and addressed promptly.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff (full-time, part-time, freelance)
- Learners and young people attending sessions
- Volunteers, contractors, and visitors
- Animals (as part of our commitment to welfare)

Health and Safety Responsibilities

Senior Management / Directors

- Ensure health and safety policies are implemented and regularly reviewed
- Provide appropriate training and resources to staff
- Monitor compliance with health and safety procedures

Health and Safety Lead

- Rebecca Perrin
- Carry out and maintain risk assessments for all activities and environments
- Conduct regular health and safety audits and inspections
- Maintain accident/incident records and report RIDDOR-notifiable incidents

Staff and Facilitators

- Follow all health and safety policies and procedures
- Carry out dynamic risk assessments during sessions
- Report hazards, accidents, and near-misses promptly
- Attend relevant training and refresher courses

Learners and Visitors

- Follow instructions given by staff
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Report concerns or hazards to a member of staff

Risk Assessments

We conduct written risk assessments for:

- Working with horses (handling, grooming, riding, leading, etc.)
- Yard safety (slippery surfaces, tools, gates, electric fences)
- Environmental factors (weather conditions, uneven terrain)
- Behavioural risks (young people with SEN, trauma history, etc.)
- Use of equipment (helmets, lead ropes, grooming tools)
- Lone working (staff or learners)
- Emergency scenarios (fire, first aid, animal escape)

Risk assessments are reviewed at least annually, or following an incident or significant change in practice.

Equine-Specific Health and Safety

Horse Welfare and Handling

- Only experienced staff handle or supervise equine activities
- Horses are selected for temperament and suitability for learners
- Horses receive routine veterinary, dental, and farrier care
- Learners are never left unsupervised around horses

Riding and Groundwork

- All learners must wear appropriate PPE (riding helmet, sturdy boots, gloves)
- Helmets must meet current safety standards (e.g., PAS 015, VG1)
- Riding is optional and only takes place following a formal assessment
- Groundwork sessions are risk-assessed and tailored to individual needs

Supervision and Behaviour Management

- Learner-to-staff ratios are maintained in line with risk assessments
- A second adult is always on-site during sessions
- Clear boundaries and behaviour expectations are explained at the start of each session
- Staff are trained in de-escalation and trauma-informed practice

First Aid and Emergency Procedures

- A qualified First Aider is present on-site during all sessions
- A fully stocked first aid kit is available in the stable area and learning spaces
- Emergency contact details and medical info are securely stored and accessible
- Emergency procedures (e.g., injury, fire, animal escape) are clearly displayed and practiced via drills

Fire Safety

- Fire extinguishers are provided and checked annually
- All staff receive fire safety training
- Escape routes and muster points are clearly marked
- Fire risk assessments are reviewed annually

Equipment and PPE

- All equipment is regularly inspected and maintained
- PPE (e.g. helmets, gloves) is provided and must be worn as instructed
- Unsafe equipment is removed from use immediately

Accident and Incident Reporting

- All incidents, injuries, and near-misses must be reported to the Health and Safety Lead
- Accidents are logged in the Accident Book (stored securely)
- Incidents involving serious injury or hospital treatment are reported in line with RIDDOR
- Incident investigations will be carried out where necessary

Training and Induction

- All new staff receive a Health and Safety induction
- Staff working with horses or learners receive additional training in:
 - Equine handling and behaviour
 - Emergency procedures
 - Safeguarding and first aid
 - Managing challenging behaviour
- Training is updated annually or as needed

Monitoring and Review

- Health and safety practices are monitored continuously by management
- This policy is reviewed annually or after any significant incident or legislative change
- Staff feedback and suggestions for improvements are actively encouraged



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