

Document Title:	Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures
Effective Date:	September 2026
Review Cycle:	Annual (or following significant incident/site changes)
Applicable Legislation:	Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

1. Policy Statement & Objectives

This policy outlines the commitment of the Alternative Provision to ensure a safe, supportive, and stimulating environment for students, staff, and visitors. Operating on a fourteen-acre site with horses, animals, Outdoor Learning and Forest School presents unique educational opportunities alongside inherent biological, physical, and environmental risks. The primary objective is to manage and minimise these risks through rigorous, systematic risk assessment methodologies without compromising the therapeutic and educational value of the setting.

2. Scope of Application

This policy applies to all activities, settings, and personnel associated with the provision, specifically:

- Working with and around animals and horses
- Equestrian instruction, stable management, and pasture maintenance.
- Forest School sessions, including tool use, shelter building, and campfire management (see additional Forest School Policy and Risk Assessments)
- Lone teaching, isolated staff sessions, and remote instruction scenarios.

3. Risk Assessment Methodology

Risk assessments must be conducted using a structured five-step approach aligned with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidelines:

- **Identify the hazards:** Look for things that could reasonably be expected to cause harm across the farm, stables, and woods.

- **Identify who might be harmed and how:** Consider students (bearing in mind high-needs or behavioral vulnerabilities), staff, volunteers, and the public.
- **Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions:** Assess the likelihood and severity of harm. Determine whether existing controls are sufficient or if more action is required.
- **Record significant findings:** Document the hazards, those at risk, and the control measures in the central risk register.
- **Review and update regularly:** Reassess annually, or immediately after a near-miss, injury, change in livestock status, or severe weather event.

4. Site-Specific Hazard Control Protocols

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are we already doing?	Further Actions
Horses and other animals • Sheep • Guinea Pigs • Dogs • Cats • Pigs • Goats • Chickens	Staff and learners may be injured by horses or other animals by kicking, biting, scratching, stepping on toes, being crushed or knocked over etc Risk of infection/hygiene risks	• Qualified First Aiders are always on site (list available in office) • First Aid Boxes are in the Stables and AP Office. • Medication for animals is kept in a secure area away from the students • "First aid at work" poster displayed. • Choosing horses and other animals carefully. • New staff will receive horse handling training and supervision training • Parents/carers provide emergency contact details/ medical info and consent to MTM AP providing the necessary medical intervention if there is an incident. This information is safely stored on the Learn Trek platform and parents notify us if there are any changes • Students understand the necessary safety measures before they handle the horses or animals and are closely supervised • Limited numbers working with horses at any one time and under the close supervision of staff/volunteers • information provided for every students at the AP regarding suitable clothing i.e. appropriate footwear with grip, gloves, wet weather clothing, sun hat, sunscreen etc. • Accident book to be completed by staff after any incident. The AP Accident book is kept in the AP office with the First Aid kit. Accidents reviewed by Nicole Gillard/Cordelia Scott after any noted incident. • Hand washing/gels available for students/staff/volunteers after all interactions	Ensure parents/carers have access to current policies and risk assessments via AP website. Liaise with MTM CIO

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are we already doing?	Further Actions
Equipment	Staff and learners may be injured if they use tools, farm or animal equipment incorrectly, especially when working with the horses/animals. This also applies to using equipment in Curiosity Cabin.	• Providing induction for learners before they meet the horses/animals. Allowing time to settle in a safe environment before meeting the horses. • Close supervision by staff/volunteers always. • All farm equipment to be stored safely, • Provide all resources for practical activities, ensuring they are fit for use, checked and maintained. • A health and safety tool/equipment talk before learner commences activity, as part of the induction. • Keys for mower to be kept securely locked away. • All sharp tools and potentially harmful tools kept secure i.e. ropes, scissors, tools, knives, pitchforks, grooming equipment, etc. • All use of animal care, tools and handling equipment to be supervised by staff/volunteers	No further action
Allergic reaction to bites, animals, seasonal allergies, hay.	Ill health from contact with animals. Risk of infection from contact with animals – especially lambs.	• Detailing the appropriate clothes to bring to a session (eg, gloves). • Identify any allergies prior to commencement of sessions, requested as medical information on referral form. • Advising facilitators to watch for sneezing/runny eyes. • Provide handwash/sanitiser for all staff and learners after animal handling. Discuss antihistamine medication needs prior to sessions for learners who have a known allergy.	Create a 'What to Bring' section on the AP website and email out a Welcome Leaflet to new students
Hazardous substances	Medication for ponies. Animal wormers. Chemical substances used around the site. Muck heap and animal droppings.	• All hazardous substances to be stored in a locked room. Learners will not be able to access the room unless directly supervised by a member of staff • Stock levels to be checked regularly by AP/ MTM CIO Director • All animals to be regularly counted and wormed, in line with the yard annual worming programme. • Learners taking part in animal care/outside learning may come into contact with droppings and therefore facilitator will ensure they wash their hands thoroughly following contact with animals. • Sanitiser is available • All animal droppings picked up regularly by staff/ volunteers and hands washed afterwards • Nettles/hazardous plants identified and controlled	No further action identified.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are we already doing?	Further Actions
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Slips and Trips	Staff and visitors risk serious injury if they slip or trip, even on the level.	- Regular, visual checks for potholes and trip hazards. Facilitators to point out trip possibilities eg paddock, toilet, decking outside Curiosity Cabin - Ensure learners wear sensible and appropriate footwear to minimise risks. - Paths to field maintained in winter with field mats/ woodchip to ensure safer surface to field.	Dynamic Risk Assessments are needed
Fields and gate entrances	Trapped fingers Escaping animals	- Staff to assist learners when appropriate. - If animal is near, facilitator to take charge of safe passage through gate. - Risk of being barged by horses at a gate	Dynamically assess and follow the Country Code. Help students to listen, understand and follow instructions.
Manual handling	Staff and Learners may be at risk of injury whilst handling equipment used around the farm and in sessions.	- Managing Director to assess risks and ensure staff are aware of safer handling guidelines. All training needs to be identified. - Health and Safety Policy to be reviewed and updated annually. - Equipment to be used, where possible, to move any heavy load – i.e. hay bales - Students to be supervised by Facilitator if moving or handling any equipment and advised on safe handling - Any injury to be dealt with immediately by Facilitator and recorded in accident book.	No further action identified.
Electricity	Staff risk injury from electrical appliances or electric fencing.	Electrical installations on premises inspected by a qualified electrician. Staff visually check leads and plugs items before use. Signs displayed regarding any electric fencing and staff and learners are instructed regarding safe use Electrical equipment checked by facilitators and PAT tested.	Dynamic Risk Assessments

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Risk to Horses and other animals from students	Horses and other animals worked with during sessions risk injury from students	Students to be always supervised during contact with animals. Facilitator to be aware of the animal's body language and to change direction of the session if the animal appears anxious or distressed in any way Twice daily visual checks of all animals to ensure they are healthy, relaxed and not appearing ill or injured. Promotion of kindness and empathy during sessions. Where a risk from a learner is identified, a further risk assessment will be completed to minimise the risk to the animals. A zero-tolerance approach to any roughness with the animals will be taken and learners not adhering will be removed from contact.	No further action identified.
Toilet Cleanliness, risk of infection	Students and staff	Toilet is cleaned twice a week. Daily checks by AP Director. Handwashing facilities/sanitiser is available. Depending on the student, staff will wait outside the toilet to check that the student is OK.	No further action identified.
Stables' Office	Staff and students	Students don't come into the office unless under close supervision. Kettle and microwave to be used only by staff. Hot water temperature to be set at comfortable level. Electrical equipment checked by facilitators and PAT tested.	
Parking area	Safety risk from incoming and site traffic to children and any animals loose in the yard. Risk of breach of confidentiality if parents/families/teachers waiting for learners and another session is running concurrently with another learner.	Parents/ carers asked to wait in car during AP session or to leave. Gates to yard areas are closed to prevent vehicles passing beyond the car park area during AP session times. Sign on drive to remind visitors to slow down and signs on gates to remind visitors that they need to stay within the parking area. Staff and volunteers will come to collect/drop off students at the parking area. Staff and volunteers at Move the Mind CIO and Move the Mind AP park in the staff car parking area before the sessions start to minimise risk of moving vehicles. If they need to move their vehicle once the AP/ Move the Mind CIO sessions have started, then they will do so in a safe manner.	
Muck heap	Slips trips & falls. Risk of flies, risk of contamination.	- Learners to be supervised - Wash/sanitise hands after contact. - Make gloves available. - Suitability of learners interaction with waste individually assessed.	

What are the	Who might be	What are we already doing?	Further
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hazards?	harm and how?		Actions
Horse riding and horse care	Risk of injury to students/staff from horses and other animals worked with during sessions	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): All staff and students must wear current certified riding helmets (PAS 015 or equivalent) and sturdy, heeled boots when handling or riding horses. Equine Selection: Only horses explicitly assessed as calm, well-schooled, and appropriate for alternative provision students may be utilised. Infrastructure integrity: Stables, arena fencing, and gates must undergo documented weekly structural checks to prevent escapes or containment failures.	Dynamic Risk Assessments
Climbing and swinging	Risk of injury to students if they fall off the swings or fall when they are climbing	Swings are only used under close supervision from a member of staff/volunteer. Signs are clearly displayed stating that students can only use the swings when they are being supervised. Accident book to be completed by staff after any incident. The AP Accident book is kept in the AP office with the First Aid kit. Accidents reviewed by Nicole Gillard/Cordelia Scott after any noted incident.	Ensure students follow the rules regarding use of swings.
Lone Teaching	Safeguarding Staff could be put in vulnerable situations	•Staff frequently work 1:1 with learners. •Wherever possible, at least two adults are present on site when learners attend. •Staff are expected to always carry a charged mobile phone with Emergency Numbers (Nicole Gillard, AP mobile and Cordelia Scott) stored on it. •Most work occurs outdoors in public or visible areas. •Indoor 1:1 work (e.g., written tasks, confidentiality needs) is conducted with: ◦A table between staff and learner ◦Doors have glass in them to maintain visibility Lone workers must: •Take reasonable care of their own safety •Carry a charged mobile phone •Follow all safeguarding and health & safety procedures •Use equipment safely •Report concerns immediately to the DSL and follow standard safeguarding procedures (see Safeguarding Policy) •Keep personal information private	Consider specific training for Lone Workers

Policy Approval

Approved by: N Gillard

Position: Director

Date: September 2026

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