Health and Safety Policy

Peopleton Brook Care Farm

Policy owner: Jake Payne, Business Manager

Approval date: 06/08/2026

Effective date: 01/09/2026

Next review: August 2027, or sooner after a serious incident or material change

> **Status:** This is PBCF's controlling health and safety policy. It applies alongside activity risk assessments and the separate First Aid, Fire Safety, Emergency Response, Lockdown, Safeguarding, Behaviour, Medication and other operational procedures. Where instructions conflict, staff must make people safe, call emergency services where needed and escalate immediately.

1. Policy statement

Peopleton Brook Care Farm (PBCF) will provide and maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy place of work and learning for children, adult participants, employees, volunteers, visitors, contractors and others affected by its activities. PBCF will manage real risks sensibly and proportionately while preserving worthwhile learning, therapeutic and farm experiences.

PBCF will provide safe premises, access and egress; safe plant, equipment and systems of work; appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision; suitable welfare and first-aid arrangements; consultation with workers; and arrangements to prevent work-related injury and ill health. No person will be disadvantaged for reporting a genuine safety concern or stopping work in the face of serious and imminent danger.

> **Safeguarding and safety:** A health and safety response must not replace a child or adult safeguarding referral. If an injury, disclosure, unsafe restraint, neglect, exploitation or conduct concern may indicate abuse, staff must follow the relevant safeguarding policy at once as well as managing the immediate physical risk.

2. Scope and responsibility boundary

This policy covers PBCF-controlled activities on the farm, in vehicles, on visits and in community or host locations. It covers routine work and learning, animal contact, land-based activity, food and workshop tasks, maintenance, events, lone work, contractors and foreseeable emergencies. It applies to children and adults, with controls adapted for age, capacity, competence, disability, health, pregnancy and other individual needs.

PBCF is a non-school alternative learning provider. PBCF remains responsible for its undertaking, premises and staff. A commissioning school or local authority remains responsible for the placement it arranges, its own statutory education and safeguarding duties, and checking that the provision is suitable. PBCF will provide risk, incident and review information promptly and will not assume that a commissioner has transferred duties which the law leaves with it.

The DfE non-school alternative-provision national standards are voluntary as at August 2026 but are adopted by PBCF as its operating benchmark. They do not replace applicable health and safety, fire, food, environmental or safeguarding law.

3. Legal and guidance framework

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996;
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH);
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 and Work at Height Regulations 2005;
- Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 and Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR);
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 where applicable;
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, Gas Safety legislation, food hygiene and allergen law, environmental and waste duties, and road-traffic law where applicable;
- Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014, relevant safeguarding law and individual healthcare-plan arrangements;
- DfE Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Duties for Schools, used as relevant good practice; and
- DfE Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards, HSE education guidance, HSE agriculture guidance and UKHSA farm-visit infection guidance.

4. Organisation and responsibilities

Role	Core responsibilities
Business Owners	Hold overall governance responsibility; approve policy, competent advice and resources; review serious incidents and performance; ensure conflicts are handled independently.
Operations Manager	Lead day-to-day implementation; maintain the responsibility register; ensure risk, training, maintenance, emergency, reporting and commissioner arrangements; stop unsafe activity and commission specialist advice.
Appointed competent person or adviser	Provide proportionate advice using sufficient skills, knowledge and experience; support inspections, risk assessments and legal updates. The current appointment must be recorded in the health and safety responsibility register rather than

Role	Core responsibilities
	assumed from this policy.
Activity or site leads	Plan work, brief controls, verify competence and equipment, supervise people, adapt or stop activity, record checks and escalate hazards or incidents.
First aiders, fire wardens and specialist role-holders	Carry out only the duties for which they are trained and appointed; maintain required records and equipment; arrange cover and escalate gaps.
All staff and volunteers	Take reasonable care; follow controls; use equipment and PPE correctly; report defects, hazards, near misses and incidents; cooperate with training and consultation; never improvise unsafe work.
Children and adult participants	Receive accessible instruction and supervision; follow agreed safety rules; report concerns and changes in health; use only authorised equipment and areas.
Commissioners, hosts and contractors	Share relevant information, cooperate on interfaces and retain their own legal and contractual responsibilities. Contractors must evidence competence, insurance and safe systems where required.

Vacant or changing role: A named person's departure does not suspend a legal duty. Jake Payne must record an interim owner for each safety-critical task and obtain external competent advice where internal competence or capacity is not available.

5. Health and safety management system

Stage	PBCF arrangements
Plan	Identify legal and commissioner requirements, hazards, vulnerable people, resources, responsible persons, controls, emergency arrangements and measurable priorities.
Do	Implement safe systems, induction, supervision, maintenance, welfare, first aid and emergency controls. Apply the hierarchy of control before relying on instructions or PPE.
Check	Complete recorded inspections; consult workers and participants; review training, defects, incidents, near misses, sickness, complaints, contractor performance and whether controls work in practice.
Act	Investigate causes, close actions, revise assessments and procedures, share lessons, notify commissioners or authorities where required, and complete a formal annual management review.

6. Risk assessment and safe planning

A suitable and sufficient assessment must be completed by a competent person before a new or materially changed activity begins. Significant findings must be recorded and communicated in a usable form. Generic assessments may cover truly common controls, but they must be checked against the actual group, weather, animals, equipment, location and staffing. Dynamic assessment supports, but does not replace, planned assessment.

- identify hazards, who may be harmed and how, including employees, children, adult participants, visitors, contractors and members of the public;
- consider young people's inexperience, immaturity and limited risk awareness, and individual medical, communication, sensory, mobility, behavioural, capacity or safeguarding needs;
- apply the hierarchy: eliminate; substitute; engineering or physical controls; safe systems and supervision; then suitable PPE as the final layer;
- state the responsible person, competence, staffing ratio, boundaries, emergency response, equipment checks and residual risk;
- consult affected staff and, where appropriate, the child, adult participant, parent, carer, advocate and commissioner; and
- review after an incident or near miss, concern, equipment or site change, new person or need, relevant legal/guidance change, or evidence that controls may not be effective.

Where a risk cannot be controlled to an acceptable level, the activity must not proceed. The decision should be recorded with safe alternatives or adjustments. A diagnosis, disability or pregnancy must not trigger a blanket exclusion; decisions must address the actual hazard and reasonable adjustments.

7. Children, adult participants and supervision

Before a placement or new activity, PBCF must obtain enough information to judge suitability and plan safe support. This includes relevant medical and allergy information, medication, mobility and communication needs, known risks, emergency contacts, agreed supervision and commissioner responsibilities. Missing critical information must be escalated; work may be limited until safe arrangements are agreed.

- Children and participants receive an accessible site and activity induction, clear boundaries, handwashing rules and a way to report that they feel unsafe.
- Supervision is active, risk-based and never replaced by a radio, CCTV, a written plan or the presence of another participant.
- Staff account for everyone during transitions, visits, emergencies and changes of activity, and follow the Attendance and Emergency Response procedures for a missing person.
- Individual healthcare, medication, allergy and emergency plans are agreed and available to staff who need them. Medication is administered or self-administered only under the written arrangements and permissions required for the placement.
- Reasonable adjustments preserve dignity and meaningful participation without transferring unmanaged risk to the person or others.
- Significant safety concerns, incidents, restrictions or changes affecting suitability are shared promptly with the commissioner and parent or carer in accordance with the placement agreement and safeguarding duties.

8. Farm, animal and infection controls

8.1 Segregation, vehicles and machinery

Learning areas and routes must be separated as far as reasonably practicable from moving vehicles, reversing areas, machinery, workshops, animal-handling systems, chemicals, fuel, slurry, manure stores,

water, fragile roofs, stacked materials and other farm-workplace hazards. Keys and start controls must be secured; defective or unguarded equipment must be isolated and labelled out of use.

- Children under 13 must never drive or ride on tractors or other agricultural self-propelled machines. PBCF's stricter site rule is that children and participants do not drive or ride on working agricultural machinery unless a separately approved activity is demonstrably lawful, insured, risk assessed and supervised by a competent instructor.
- Children under 16 must not drive, operate or help operate prohibited harvesting, conveying, cutting, crushing, spraying, lift-truck, skid-steer or all-terrain equipment. No child or participant may use powered work equipment merely because an adult is nearby.
- Vehicle and pedestrian movements are planned; reversing is avoided where possible and controlled where necessary. Passengers use proper seats and restraints; no one rides on loads, drawbars, trailers or unsuitable equipment.
- Only trained, authorised and medically fit people operate plant or specialist equipment. PUWER, LOLER, guarding, isolation, maintenance and statutory examination requirements are followed as applicable.

8.2 Animals and zoonotic infection

- Animal contact is planned around species, temperament, disease status, birthing, feeding, handling, escape, crush, kick, bite, scratch and allergy risks. Suitable barriers, handling systems, escape routes and staff positioning are used.
- People wash hands thoroughly with running water, liquid soap and hygienic drying after animal or environmental contact and before eating. Alcohol gel or wipes are not a substitute for proper handwashing on farms.
- Eating, drinking, smoking, vaping, face touching and placing personal items on contaminated surfaces are prohibited in animal-contact areas. Food areas and routes are separated from animal areas.
- Cuts and grazes are covered; contaminated footwear and clothing are managed; bites, scratches, needlestick or veterinary-medicine exposure and symptoms after contact are reported and assessed promptly.
- Pregnant, immunocompromised or otherwise vulnerable people receive individual advice and controls, including exclusion from lambing, calving, birth products or other identified high-risk contact where necessary.
- PBCF follows current HSE and UKHSA guidance, veterinary advice and outbreak controls. Suspected zoonotic illness or unusual animal disease is escalated to appropriate health, veterinary or regulatory services.

9. Premises and activity controls

Area	Required control
Workplace, routes and welfare	Maintain safe access, lighting, ventilation, temperature, drinking water, toilets, washing and rest facilities. Control slips, trips, mud, ice, uneven ground, gates and falling objects; maintain accessible routes and emergency access.
Work at height	Avoid where possible; assess, plan and supervise; use suitable equipment

Area	Required control
	inspected by competent people. Children and participants do not access roofs, fragile surfaces, silos, stacks or improvised platforms.
Manual handling	Avoid hazardous handling; assess load, task, environment and individual capability; use mechanical aids or team handling and training. Children must not lift loads unsuitable for their age or ability.
Water and confined spaces	Restrict and secure access to ponds, tanks, slurry, pits, wells, grain bins and confined spaces. No child or participant enters a confined space. Specialist work requires a separate safe system, competence and rescue plan.
Weather and outdoor work	Check forecasts and conditions; control heat, sun, cold, storms, wind, flooding, lightning, poor air quality, mud and darkness; provide suitable clothing, hydration, shade, breaks and cancellation triggers.
Food and allergens	Follow food-safety, hygiene and allergen procedures; prevent cross-contamination; retain required information; take individual allergy and anaphylaxis plans into account.
Waste, sharps and biological material	Segregate, secure, label and dispose through lawful routes. Only trained authorised people handle sharps, clinical waste, veterinary waste, animal carcasses or contaminated material using the specified equipment and PPE.
Lone working and personal safety	Assess whether work can be done alone; set contact and escalation arrangements; prohibit lone work for tasks requiring assistance, rescue, safeguarding coverage or specific supervision; follow the Radio and Emergency Response procedures.

10. COSHH, chemicals and dangerous substances

PBCF will prevent exposure to hazardous substances where reasonably practicable and otherwise control it adequately under COSHH. Assessment must cover chemicals, cleaning products, fuels, dusts, fumes, gases, microorganisms, animal waste, veterinary medicines and other biological agents; a safety data sheet alone is not a COSHH assessment.

- approve substances before purchase; choose safer substitutes and minimum quantities; maintain a current inventory, assessment and safety data information;
- store substances in compatible, secure, ventilated and signed locations, away from food, ignition and unauthorised access; retain original labelled containers and never use food or drink containers;
- provide task-specific instruction, engineering controls, spill arrangements, exposure controls and suitable PPE; maintain and examine local exhaust or respiratory protection where used;
- permit only trained and authorised people to use pesticides, veterinary medicines, fuel, gas cylinders or other higher-risk products; and
- report leaks, spills, exposure, damaged packaging or missing labels immediately; isolate the area, follow the assessment and emergency information, and do not improvise clean-up.

11. Electricity, equipment, maintenance and premises hazards

Equipment must be suitable, installed, used and maintained to prevent danger. Users complete pre-use checks and remove damaged equipment from service. Inspection and testing intervals are based on equipment type, environment, use, manufacturer information and experience; the law does not require every portable appliance to receive an annual PAT test. Fixed electrical work and higher-risk testing are completed by competent people.

- maintain registers and planned checks for specialist equipment, lifting equipment, pressure systems, fire systems, gas, electrical installations, vehicles and other safety-critical assets as applicable;
- use lock-off, isolation and permit arrangements where required; never bypass guards, interlocks or safety devices;
- control contractors through selection, information exchange, induction, site segregation, monitoring and handover;
- maintain an asbestos management plan and register where the duty applies; provide information before intrusive work and stop immediately if suspect material is disturbed; and
- record defects, responsible person, priority, interim control and closure. Safety-critical defects require immediate isolation or closure of the area.

12. First aid, medical needs and emergencies

PBCF will maintain a first-aid needs assessment covering employees, children, adult participants, the rural location, farm hazards, group size, working hours, travel and emergency-response times. Suitable trained cover, equipment and information must be available whenever provision operates, including off site. Kits are checked at a frequency set by the needs assessment and after use; expired or missing items are replaced promptly.

Only trained and authorised staff provide first aid or medication within their competence. Emergency medication and individual plans must be accessible without compromising security. Call 999 immediately for a life-threatening emergency; staff do not require managerial permission. Follow the Emergency Response Plan for access, handover, accounting, parent or carer contact, commissioner notification and recovery.

Fire risk assessment, alarms, emergency lighting, extinguishers, escape routes, drills and personal emergency evacuation arrangements are governed by the Fire Safety procedure. Evacuation, shelter and lockdown are distinct responses. The current assembly or rendezvous location must be verified in the Emergency Response Plan and communicated on site; this policy does not create a competing location.

13. Accident, incident and near-miss reporting

- Make the area safe, give first aid and call emergency services where needed. Preserve evidence without delaying care.
- Record injuries, ill health, exposure, violence, property damage, dangerous occurrences and near misses promptly, factually and securely. Record the person, time, location, activity, injury or outcome, immediate controls, witnesses and notifications.
- Notify the parent or carer and commissioner promptly for a child, subject to safeguarding advice. Notify an adult participant's agreed contact where appropriate and lawful.

- Jake Payne or a delegated competent person assesses RIDDOR. Not every accident is reportable. A responsible person makes any report within the statutory route and timescale; staff must not submit duplicate reports unless authorised.
- For a non-worker such as a pupil or visitor, RIDDOR generally requires a work-related accident and direct transfer from the scene to hospital for treatment; diagnostic checks alone are not treatment. Worker injury, disease and dangerous-occurrence tests differ and must be checked against current HSE guidance.
- Investigate proportionately to identify immediate, underlying and organisational causes rather than blame; agree actions, owners and dates; update assessments and share learning with commissioners or others who need it.

> **Serious incident:** Do not wait for an internal investigation before calling 999, making a safeguarding referral, notifying the commissioner or preserving a statutory reporting deadline. Data protection does not prevent necessary, proportionate safety or safeguarding information sharing.

14. Training, consultation and occupational health

All staff and volunteers receive health and safety induction before unsupervised duties and refresher information when risks, equipment, law or responsibilities change. Training must match the work and be understood; higher-risk activities require verified competence and supervision, not attendance at a generic briefing alone. Records include content, trainer, date, competence or authorisation, restrictions and refresh date.

PBCF will consult employees directly or through elected representatives on matters affecting their health and safety. Staff, participants and families are encouraged to identify practical improvements. Occupational-health support, health surveillance and exposure monitoring will be arranged where assessment or law requires it. Work-related stress, violence, fatigue and wellbeing are managed as health and safety risks alongside physical hazards.

15. Monitoring, audit and review

- Daily or pre-use checks are completed where the activity or equipment requires them; responsible leads complete planned workplace and farm inspections at a frequency based on risk.
- Jake Payne reviews overdue actions, defects, incidents, near misses, first-aid use, sickness, training, equipment checks, contractor issues, safeguarding interfaces and commissioner feedback at least termly.
- Business Owners complete a formal annual review of performance, competence, resources, compliance and priorities and record decisions.
- This policy and related assessments are reviewed at least annually and sooner after a serious incident, enforcement contact, material change, emerging pattern or relevant change in law, guidance, premises, equipment or provision.
- Where current controls cannot be evidenced, the relevant activity is paused or restricted until the gap is assessed and an accountable interim control is recorded.

Appendix A - Staff immediate-action guide

Situation	Immediate action
Immediate danger or serious injury	Stop activity if safe; protect people; call 999; give first aid within competence; follow the Emergency Response Plan; account for everyone; preserve access and evidence.
Hazard or equipment defect	Stop use; isolate or close the area; label it; prevent access; notify the activity lead or Jake Payne; record the defect and interim control.
Near miss	Make safe and report it the same day. Record what could have happened and review the risk assessment; absence of injury does not mean the control was adequate.
Animal bite, scratch or contamination	Move to safety; wash or irrigate as appropriate; obtain first-aid/medical advice; identify the animal and exposure without taking further risk; record and escalate.
Spill, gas, fumes or unknown substance	Keep people away; avoid contact or ignition; raise the alarm; use the COSHH emergency plan only if trained and equipped; call emergency services where required.
Child or adult says an activity feels unsafe	Listen and pause if necessary; assess the actual risk and support needs; do not pressure participation; tell the lead and record or escalate the concern.
Staff member believes danger is serious and imminent	Withdraw to safety and alert others without placing yourself at further risk; contact management and emergency services as needed. Do not resume until authorised controls are in place.

Appendix B - Minimum risk assessment record

- activity, location, date, assessor, people consulted and planned review date;
- hazards and how employees, children, adult participants, visitors, contractors or the public could be harmed;
- individual factors: age, experience, health, allergy, medication, pregnancy, disability, communication, behaviour, capacity and safeguarding;
- existing controls, hierarchy of control considered, additional actions, responsible person and due date;
- competence, supervision or ratios, equipment and PPE, access boundaries and stop conditions;
- first aid, emergency communication, rescue, accounting, weather and off-site arrangements;
- residual risk and authorisation, information shared with staff, participant, family and commissioner; and
- monitoring and review after change, concern, incident, near miss or evidence that a control is ineffective.

Sources and related guidance

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and supporting regulations — UK Parliament / HSE.

Health and Safety: Responsibilities and Duties for Schools — Department for Education.

Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards — Department for Education, August 2025.

Agriculture guidance and Farmwise — Health and Safety Executive.

Children and Public Safety on Farms — Health and Safety Executive.

Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitor Attractions — Health and Safety Executive.

Farm Visits: Avoiding Infection — UK Health Security Agency, updated March 2026.

Incident Reporting in Schools and RIDDOR Guidance — Health and Safety Executive.

Portable Appliance Testing and Maintaining Electrical Equipment — Health and Safety Executive.

First Aid in Schools, Early Years and Further Education — Department for Education.

Emergency Planning and Response for Education Settings — Department for Education.

Approval record

Approved by	Role	Signature	Date
Jake Payne	Business Manager	Jake Payne	06/08/2026

Next review due: August 2027, or sooner under section 15.