Whole-Site Risk Assessment Policy and Procedure

Wayland Stables Care Farm

Policy version: 1.0 - August 2026

Policy owner: Jake Payne, Business Manager

Approval date: To be completed on approval

Effective date: Upon approval

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

> **Document status:** This policy governs risk assessment across the whole site. It does not replace the separate Operational Risk Assessment - Farm Activities, Animal Handling & Practical Learning, task-specific assessments, COSHH assessments, fire risk assessment, individual plans or dynamic checks. Those records remain in force and must be reviewed against this policy.

1. Policy statement

Wayland Stables Care Farm (WSCF) will identify hazards, decide who may be harmed and how, eliminate or control risk so far as is reasonably practicable, record significant findings and check that controls work in practice. Risk assessment will be proportionate, evidence-based and integrated into planning rather than treated as a one-off form.

WSCF supports worthwhile farm, animal-care, practical-learning and therapeutic experiences. Risk assessment is used to enable safe participation, not to remove all challenge. No activity will proceed where the remaining risk is unacceptable, a safety-critical control is absent, or the people leading and supervising it lack the required competence or information.

> **Immediate authority:** Any staff member may pause or stop an activity, isolate equipment or move people to safety when conditions differ from the assessment or danger may be serious and imminent. Calling 999 never requires managerial permission.

2. Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all WSCF-controlled premises, land, buildings, yards, access routes, animal areas, workshops, learning rooms, kitchens, storage, welfare areas, vehicles, off-site activities and work undertaken by or for WSCF. It covers employees, children and young people, adult participants, volunteers, visitors, contractors, delivery personnel and members of the public who may be affected.

It establishes the common method for whole-site, activity, task, equipment, substance, person-specific, event, contractor and change-related assessment. It also sets the relationship between planned assessments and the dynamic judgements staff make during the day in response to weather, animal behaviour, student presentation, staffing, equipment and site conditions.

WSCF is a non-school alternative learning provider. WSCF remains responsible for the risks created by its undertaking and premises. Commissioning schools and local authorities retain their own statutory and contractual duties, including placement suitability, information sharing and oversight. Shared risks must have an agreed lead and information route; they must not be left unmanaged because each party assumes the other is responsible.

3. Legal and guidance framework

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, including assessment, cooperation, competence, emergency planning, young-person and new or expectant mother duties;
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), including biological agents and zoonoses;
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER), Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 and Work at Height Regulations 2005;
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and applicable electrical, gas, food, environmental, road-traffic and public-safety duties;
- Equality Act 2010, relevant safeguarding law and duties relating to children, disability, health, pregnancy and reasonable adjustments;
- HSE risk-assessment and agriculture guidance, including Farmwise, children on farms, workplace transport and animal-contact infection control; and
- DfE Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards, adopted by WSCF as its operating benchmark while non-statutory.

4. Responsibilities

Role	Required action
Business Owners	Approve this policy and adequate resources; appoint or obtain competent health-and-safety advice; review serious or repeated risks; hold Jake Payne to account for action closure.
Jake Payne - Business Manager	Own the risk-assessment system and register; allocate assessors and actions; coordinate commissioner interfaces; verify inspections and reviews; restrict activity where evidence or controls are missing.

Role	Required action
Appointed competent person/adviser	Support complex or specialist assessments using sufficient skills, knowledge and experience. The current appointment must be recorded in the controlled responsibility register and is not created by this policy.
Assessment or activity lead	Inspect the actual location and task; consult affected people; complete and communicate the assessment; verify staff, supervision, equipment and emergency arrangements; monitor and stop when needed.
All staff and volunteers	Follow controls, check conditions, use equipment and PPE correctly, report change or defects, record incidents and near misses, and never improvise work outside their competence or authorisation.
Children and adult participants	Receive accessible information, follow agreed boundaries, use only authorised areas and equipment, and tell staff about hazards, health changes or when they feel unsafe.
Commissioners, visitors and contractors	Provide relevant information, cooperate with WSCF controls and retain their own duties. Contractors provide suitable risk and method information and follow site induction and access controls.

5. Risk-assessment hierarchy and controlled records

Record	When it is required	Relationship to this policy
Whole-site baseline assessment	At least annually and after material premises, access, activity or population change.	Checks common site hazards, interfaces and control systems across all operating areas.
Operational/activity assessment	For recurring farm, animal, workshop, gardening, travel or learning activities.	The existing Operational Risk Assessment remains the core generic activity register and must be made specific to the day and group.
Task/equipment assessment	For non-routine, higher-risk, maintenance, machinery, work-at-height, forestry or specialist tasks.	Sets competence, exclusion, guarding, isolation, supervision, PPE and stop conditions.
COSHH or biological-agent assessment	For chemicals, dusts, fumes, fuels, veterinary products, waste, microorganisms and zoonotic exposure.	Uses substance and exposure information; a safety data sheet alone is not an assessment.
Fire risk assessment	For premises and fire precautions under the Fire Safety Order.	Remains a distinct statutory assessment linked to fire and emergency procedures.
Individual risk/support plan	When a person's age, health, disability, allergy, medication, communication, behaviour, trauma or safeguarding context changes the risk or controls.	Supports reasonable adjustments and participation; it must not be used as a blanket exclusion.
Dynamic assessment	Immediately before and throughout work when conditions can change.	Confirms or adapts the written plan; it does not replace a planned assessment for foreseeable hazards.

6. Required assessment method

1. Define the work. State the activity, location, equipment, people, timing, interfaces and foreseeable non-routine conditions.
2. Identify hazards and people at risk. Inspect the site; consider routine and unusual work, emergencies and how employees, children, adult participants, visitors, contractors or the public could be harmed.
3. Evaluate existing controls. Consider likelihood and credible severity, including foreseeable misuse, simultaneous activities and individual vulnerability. Do not assume a rule is effective without evidence that it is understood and followed.
4. Apply the hierarchy of control. Eliminate; substitute; isolate or engineer out the risk; use safe systems, competence, staffing and supervision; then use PPE as the final layer. Safeguarding and reasonable-adjustment duties remain active.
5. Record and authorise. State significant findings, initial and residual risk, actions, owner, deadline, emergency arrangements and who approved the activity. Communicate the controls in an accessible way.
6. Monitor and review. Check the controls during delivery, close actions and review after change, concern, incident, near miss, enforcement contact or evidence that a control is ineffective.

> **Consultation:** Assessors must involve the people who understand the work and, where appropriate, the child or adult participant, parent or carer, advocate, commissioner, contractor and specialist adviser. A copied assessment is not suitable unless it has been checked against WSCF's actual site, people and arrangements.

7. Risk rating and decision rules

WSCF uses a simple 4 x 4 matrix to support consistent judgement. The score is likelihood multiplied by credible consequence. Assessors record the risk before further action and the expected residual risk after controls. A number never overrides professional judgement, legal requirements or a missing critical control.

Score	Band	Required response
1-3	Low	Proceed with routine controls and normal monitoring.
4-6	Medium	Proceed only with named controls, active supervision where required and timely improvement actions.
8-9	High	Senior authorisation and additional controls are required before proceeding; restrict access or activity until residual risk is acceptable.
12-16	Critical	Do not start, or stop immediately. Eliminate or redesign the work and obtain competent advice before reconsideration.

Level	Likelihood	Consequence
1	Unlikely in normal operation	Minor harm requiring little or no treatment

Level	Likelihood	Consequence
2	Possible but not expected	Injury or ill health requiring treatment or short absence
3	Likely in the circumstances	Major injury, serious ill health or hospital treatment
4	Very likely or repeatedly exposed	Fatality, life-changing harm or multiple serious casualties

Scores possible in the 4 x 4 matrix are 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12 and 16. If uncertainty could materially change the band, use the higher credible rating until further evidence is obtained.

8. Whole-site baseline hazard map

The following domains must be examined in the whole-site assessment. They are prompts, not a substitute for inspecting every area or completing the linked specialist assessment.

Domain	Minimum whole-site controls and evidence
Access, perimeter and security	Secure boundaries and restricted areas; controlled keys; safe pedestrian access; gate padlocked 9:40am-3:30pm under the Visitor Policy; expected late arrival/early collection; pre-booked visitor list; Ring doorbell verification; sign-in/out and visible lanyards.
Vehicles, deliveries and parking	Separate pedestrians and vehicles; plan deliveries outside student movement where practicable; control reversing; secure keys; maintain emergency access; apply Minibus Policy controls.
Machinery, tools and workshops	Authorised operators; guarding, Safe Stop/isolation, inspections and maintenance; age/competence restrictions; exclusion zones; safe storage; task-specific assessment for powered or higher-risk equipment.
Animals and handling systems	Species and temperament assessment; secure gates; suitable barriers, escape space and staff position; matching task to participant; bite, kick, crush, escape, birthing and veterinary risks.
Infection, hygiene and biosecurity	Running water, liquid soap and hygienic drying; separation of eating and animal areas; cleaning and waste controls; covered cuts; exposure response; zoonosis/COSHH and outbreak arrangements.
Ground, buildings and welfare	Control mud, ice, slips, uneven ground, lighting, temperature, ventilation, stairs, gates, glazing and falling objects; maintain toilets, drinking water, washing, rest and accessible routes.
Fire, utilities and emergencies	Current fire risk assessment; alarms, exits and drills; safe electricity, gas and fuel; emergency access and communications; consistent ERP, lockdown and accounting arrangements.
COSHH, dust, fumes and waste	Approved inventory and assessment; secure compatible storage; safe use and spill response; dust and respiratory controls; sharps, clinical, veterinary and animal-waste arrangements.
Weather, trees, water and environment	Forecast and site checks; heat, cold, wind, lightning, flooding, ice and poor air quality triggers; secure ponds, tanks, pits, slurry, stacks and tree-work areas.

Domain	Minimum whole-site controls and evidence
Learning, behaviour and safeguarding	Suitable group, staffing and supervision; clear boundaries; behaviour/support plans; missing-person and serious-incident routes; no health-and-safety control used to bypass safeguarding duties.
Medical, allergy and first aid	Current emergency and health information; trained cover; accessible medication and equipment; allergy/anaphylaxis controls; rural response/access plan; recording and follow-up.
Manual handling, ergonomics and work health	Avoid or reduce hazardous lifting; mechanical aids; load/task/person assessment; control repetitive work, noise, vibration, dust, stress, fatigue and violence; surveillance where required.
Visitors, contractors and lone work	Pre-booking, induction, competence and insurance checks; site segregation and handover; escort/supervision; lone-work communication and tasks prohibited without assistance or rescue cover.

9. Children, individual needs and reasonable adjustments

- Assess young people's inexperience, immaturity, curiosity, stature, physical capacity and ability to recognise or communicate danger. A child must not enter a work area merely because an adult is present.
- Obtain relevant placement information before attendance, including health, allergy, medication, mobility, sensory, communication, behaviour, trauma, capacity, safeguarding and emergency-contact information. Escalate missing safety-critical information.
- Plan reasonable adjustments with the person and relevant adults or professionals. Adapt the task, environment, communication, timing, equipment or staffing before excluding someone from a worthwhile activity.
- Complete the legally required specific assessment for a young worker and for a new or expectant mother where applicable. Consider immunosuppression, pregnancy and other vulnerability in animal-contact, infection, chemical and manual-handling work.
- Review individual controls when needs, medication, presentation, attendance pattern, staffing or activity changes, and after any relevant incident or concern.

10. Infectious disease, including COVID-19

COVID-19 will not remain as a separate permanent generic site hazard with emergency-era controls. It is managed within WSCF's broader respiratory and infectious-disease arrangements, alongside influenza, gastrointestinal illness and zoonotic disease. A separate outbreak or person-specific assessment will be opened when the circumstances, public-health advice or an individual's vulnerability justify it.

- encourage anyone with a high temperature or who feels too unwell for normal activities to follow current public-health advice and notify WSCF so attendance and support can be considered safely;
- maintain effective ventilation where practicable, hand and respiratory hygiene, suitable cleaning and prompt management of bodily-fluid contamination;

- protect clinically vulnerable or immunosuppressed people through confidential individual assessment and proportionate adjustments;
- monitor unusual clusters, seek health or veterinary advice where indicated, communicate proportionately and activate enhanced controls for a credible outbreak; and
- use masks, testing, distancing, temperature checks or temporary activity restrictions only where a current assessment or authoritative advice supports them, rather than as automatic permanent controls.

> **COVID-19 decision:** The old standalone COVID-19 entry should be marked superseded, not copied into this policy. Routine universal masking, two-metre distancing, temperature-taking and bans on shared equipment are not WSCF's default controls in August 2026; they may be reintroduced when evidence and a current assessment require them.

11. Dynamic assessment and change control

At the start of each day and before each activity, the lead checks people, place, plant/equipment, animals, weather and emergency arrangements against the written assessment. Staff continue to reassess throughout the activity. Any material difference is controlled, recorded and escalated according to its significance.

- Stop and reassess after an animal, equipment, weather, staffing, health, behaviour, visitor or site change that could invalidate the planned controls.
- Do not treat repeated last-minute adaptation as a substitute for updating a written assessment. Recurring change must be added to the controlled record.
- A new activity, item of plant, chemical, construction or maintenance project, site-layout change, event or external provider requires assessment before approval or purchase where reasonably practicable.
- Safety-critical defects are isolated and labelled; access is prevented; the defect, interim control, owner and closure evidence are recorded.

12. Communication, competence and supervision

Assessments must be available to people who implement them and communicated in a form they can understand. A signature alone does not prove understanding or competence. Briefings should identify the actual hazards, boundaries, control measures, emergency response, stop conditions and who to contact.

- Induction covers the site layout, restricted areas, access and gate procedure, animals, hygiene, fire/emergency arrangements, incident reporting and stop-work authority.
- Higher-risk work requires verified training, experience, authorisation and supervision appropriate to the task; contractors remain responsible for their competence and method while cooperating with WSCF controls.
- Supervision levels are set by the activity and people involved and are reviewed when the group, presentation or environment changes. Radios, CCTV or written plans do not replace active supervision.
- Children, adult participants and visitors receive concise, accessible instructions and the opportunity to say they do not understand or feel safe.

13. Incidents, monitoring and review

- Make people safe, give first aid within competence, call emergency services where needed and follow the Emergency Response and Serious Incident procedures.
- Record accidents, ill health, exposures, defects, dangerous occurrences and near misses promptly. Preserve evidence without delaying care or safeguarding action.
- The assessment owner investigates proportionately, identifies immediate and underlying causes, assigns actions and updates affected assessments. RIDDOR is assessed under the Health and Safety Policy; not every incident is reportable.
- Activity leads check controls during delivery. Jake Payne reviews open high/critical risks and overdue actions promptly, and site inspection, incident, near-miss, training, maintenance and commissioner information at least termly.
- Business Owners complete a recorded annual review of the system, resources, competent advice and major risks. This policy and the whole-site baseline assessment are reviewed at least annually and sooner after serious incident, material change, relevant guidance change or evidence of control failure.
- Superseded assessments are archived with their dates; the current version is identifiable and accessible. Personal or medical risk information is shared only with those who need it and retained securely under the Data Protection Policy.

Appendix A - Staff immediate-action guide

Situation	Immediate response
Conditions differ from the assessment	Pause; move people to a safe position; check the written controls; adapt only within competence; record a material change and tell the lead.
Serious or imminent danger	Stop work; warn others; withdraw without creating further risk; isolate if safe; call 999 where needed; do not restart until authorised controls are verified.
Equipment, boundary or gate defect	Prevent use or access; secure or supervise the area; label the defect; notify Jake Payne/lead; record interim control and repair evidence.
Person's health, behaviour or support changes	Pause and regulate the situation; follow individual, medical, behaviour and safeguarding plans; obtain help; review suitability and adjustments before continuing.
Animal behaviour changes	Create distance and an escape route; follow handler instructions; do not chase or corner; secure people and other animals; reassess before re-entry.
Near miss or minor incident	Make safe and report the same day. Record what could have happened and review the assessment even when no injury occurred.

Appendix B - Whole-site inspection checklist

- Access and perimeter secure; gate/door controls functioning; visitors and contractors expected and accounted for; emergency access maintained.

- Pedestrian routes, yards, parking, delivery and reversing areas safe; lighting, mud, ice, obstructions and uneven surfaces controlled.
- Animal fences, gates, pens, handling spaces and exclusion zones suitable; animal health/behaviour changes and biosecurity restrictions checked.
- Machinery, tools, guards, keys, isolation and maintenance status safe; defective equipment removed from use; workshops and stores secure.
- Fire exits, alarms, extinguishers, assembly/accounting information, first-aid supplies, emergency medication, radios/phones and access information ready.
- Chemicals, fuel, gas, veterinary products, waste and sharps stored and labelled; spill and exposure controls available; food and animal areas separated.
- Washing, toilets, drinking water, ventilation, temperature, cleaning and welfare arrangements adequate; respiratory/infectious-disease concerns considered.
- Weather, trees, water, flooding, wind, heat, ice and other environmental conditions checked against cancellation or relocation triggers.
- Today's staffing, competence, supervision, individual plans, allergies, medication and commissioner information sufficient for planned activities.
- Actions recorded with owner, due date, interim control and closure evidence; high/critical gaps escalated and affected activity restricted.

Appendix C - Minimum risk-assessment record

Field	Required information
Assessment details	Title; activity/site area; assessor and competence; date; people consulted; version; review date.
People and interfaces	Employees, children, adult participants, visitors, contractors, public; simultaneous work; commissioner/host responsibilities.
Hazards and harm	Hazard source; foreseeable event or exposure; who could be harmed and credible consequences; existing controls and evidence.
Individual factors	Age, experience, health, allergy, medication, pregnancy, disability, communication, behaviour, capacity and safeguarding factors where relevant.
Risk decision	Likelihood, consequence and initial band; hierarchy considered; additional actions, owner and deadline; residual band; approval and restrictions.
Delivery controls	Competence, authorisation, staffing/supervision, boundaries, equipment checks, PPE, hygiene, emergency/first-aid/rescue and stop conditions.
Communication and review	Who received the controls and how understanding was checked; monitoring result; changes, incidents/near misses, action closure and next review.

Sources and related guidance

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

Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work — Health and Safety Executive.

Risk Assessment in Agriculture 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.

Living Safely with Respiratory Infections, Including COVID-19 — UK Health Security Agency.

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

WSCF Health and Safety Policy 2026, Operational Risk Assessment and linked controlled procedures — Wayland Stables Care Farm.

Revision history and approval

Version	Date	Summary of change	Owner
1.0	Aug 2026	New whole-site risk-assessment policy and procedure created from the Operational Risk Assessment template. Establishes governance, method, site hazard map, COVID-19 position and operational appendices without replacing the existing activity assessment.	Jake Payne

Approval record

Approved by	Role	Signature	Date

Next review due: August 2027, or sooner under section 13.