**WCFP Health and Safety policy 2021**

**Introduction**

Whitehawk Community Food Project is a small grassroots community organisation currently run by volunteers.

Our aim is :

“To further awareness and participation of the local community in organic food production, incorporating sustainable principles, and fostering biodiversity of the local environment.”

All activities carry an element of risk and allotment gardening is no exception. **Everyone needs to take health and safety** seriously but it is also important not to become ‘litigation paranoid’. Good gardening is safe gardening, and many risks to both ourselves and others can be easily prevented.

**All members have a responsibility to help the project achieve a healthy and safe working and learning environment, and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.**

This policy helps to make sure everyone involved in the project understands how to keep the garden safe, to prevent accidents or harm to people, and to look out for each other’s well-being.

WCFP’s committee accepts responsibility for mitigating risks as far as possible and are committed to ensuring that safety procedures are agreed to in a member induction and policies in full are made accessible to all members.

Our Health & Safety Policy is a requirement of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. and applies throughout WCFP being the primary Health & Safety document within WCFP. .Our Health & Safety Policy is also implemented through our Policies, **Rules**, **Risk strategy**, **Risk Assessments** and Induction to the site by the volunteer coordinator.

**Risk Assessments.**

Annual risk and hazard assessment will be carried out by the Committee, each October and appropriate actions taken both to minimise hazards and risks, and to update this policy.

(A hazard is something that can cause injury, for example the road access, power tools, exposed sharp edges, trips and slips. Hazards can sometimes be removed, but may be inevitable. Risks are the potential threats caused by the hazards, for example injury from a hidden sharp edge, a vehicle accident. Risks can usually be avoided.)

If a change in operations or conditions takes place, a new risk assessment will be created regardless of the timeframe.

Care will be taken to minimise risk at all events and activities. A general garden risk assessment is in place for the project overall, with separate assessments for pond dipping, bonfires, forest school games and den building.

A risk assessment will be carried out before any special event, ( other than volunteer days), to include risk to people from activities

**Site safety**

The Volunteer Coordinator will do a site check during each session to identify and address hazards and maintenance requirements.No volunteer will run an activity on their own, and at least two volunteers should stay at an event until it has finished, and the last attendees have left, and will be responsible for securing the site.

All members must complete a **Health & Safety Induction** and give signed agreement that they have read and will abide by this Health and Safety Policy and follow the attached procedures relating to Fire, Food Safety and Hygiene.

The Volunteer coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the health and safety policy and for recording all accidents and reporting serious accidents or near misses to the committee and where appropriate RIDDOR. These records are to be kept in an appropriate **Accident Book** for six years from the date of the incident by the secretary.

Our **Risk strategy** is in place for external groups visiting. It also outlines our aims to safeguard children and vulnerable adults in particular with Enhanced DBS checks and or goal for updated First Aid training for volunteer coordinators, funding permitting.

Injuries and “near-misses”, and any other safety-related issues must be reported to a member of the Committee so that any existing hazard or risk can be eliminated and prevented in the future

**Communication**

We will make sure all users, volunteers, visitors and employees are aware of our policy.

All new visitors to the garden will have a site tour, including a health and safety induction.

All members should be made aware of the problems caused by extremes of weather i.e. heat and sun, cold, heavy winds, heavy rain etc. and advised on what is suitable clothing and footwear for working outside. The use of PPE should be highlighted in the site rules and in the members induction.

Open discussion regarding health and safety matters is encouraged, and anyone involved in the project is encouraged to report hazards and things that might go wrong to the committee

**Poor Weather Procedures**

Volunteer coordinators to use the BBC online weather service are used to make judgements for each session. Winds above 25-31mph or during thunderstorms should lead to cancellation of sessions.Members will be alerted to cancellation by Whatsapp.or by a phone call if necessary.

**Emergencies and incidents**

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for assessing the situation, calling emergency services if required, stopping all activity and organising staff and volunteers to keep the situation calm and well-managed according to our Emergency Procedures.

Emergency Procedures are displayed in the shelter as well as the lockup [at the top of the site] including details of project location to tell emergency services.

**First Aid**

We will have a trained first aider present during all work days and for every event.

The First Aid box will be restocked on a weekly basis. Any stock removed will be written in the back of the first aid book so it can be replenished weekly.

Incidents will be recorded in the First Aid book, to the right of the lockup, by the volunteer coordinator.

Although our current volunteer coordinators Jan Phillipson- Safeguarding and Charmaine Evans – Chairperson, are DBS checked and have first aid training, we endeavor to update training when courses and funding are available.

This applies to all new volunteer coordinators in the future. (It must be remembered that we are a small grassroots community organization, with limited funds run by volunteers.)

**Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for health and safety at all events and activities organised by WCFP lies with the committee .

This responsibility is delegated to theVolunteer Coordinator who is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the policy, for recording all incidents and reporting serious accidents or near misses to the committee.

The Committee is responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are in place throughout the organisation and reviewed annually.

The committee is responsible for the overall effectiveness of the Health and Safety Policy, including policy implementation and review; and investigating serious incidents.

All members have a responsibility to help the project achieve a healthy and safe working and learning environment, and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.

**Here is some general safety guidance :**

Volunteer coordinators should ensure the toilet is cleaned before each volunteer session and supplies restocked. Appropriate PPE and cleaning materials should be restocked regularly. See **Toileting policy**

WCFP should ensure that their plot and associated accesses are free from hazard: hazards may include sharp edges, exposed nails, improperly stored tools, hazards hidden within undergrowth such as discarded tools and improperly stored dangerous materials see **COSHH policy.**

All members and coordinators have a responsibility to cooperate with outside organisations to achieve a healthy and safe working and learning environment and to take reasonable care of themselves and others.

Members will be given advice and guidance on the correct use of tools and it is their responsibility to follow these. Tool talks for each tool will be made available for children or adults with limited experience.

Equipment and tools kept on site will be reviewed annually, to ensure they are safe and fit for use.

Volunteers are to be alerted to potentially toxic plants and fungus present on site.A visual guide will be displayed when these plants are present.

We will safeguard children and vulnerable adults participating in activities at WCFP in accordance with our Procedures for Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults **outlined in our Safeguarding policy.**

We will review this policy on an annual basis to make sure it continues to meet the needs of the project and its users.

**Policies connected with Health and Safety include:**

**Pre session checklist**

**Toileting policy**

**COSH- control of hazardous substances**

**Food Safety and hygiene procedures**

**Water Policy**

**Safeguarding Policy.**

**Risk assessments**

**Code of conduct**

**Emergency evacuation procedure**