



RISK ASSESSMENT

Company Name: The Nurture Paddocks

Date of Risk Assessment: 03/10/22

Last Reviewed: 23/08/26

General Risk Assessment

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Slips and trips	Staff, participants and visitors may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages.	General care of work areas. Keep work areas clear. Equipment to be put away in correct place after use.	Ensure all staff, volunteers and visitors are aware of where to put equipment after use. Not to leave anything left on the floor unattended, etc.	Roisin Whyte, All staff & learners	Continuous	Regularly
Contact with equines	Staff, participants and visitors could be injured if they are not sure of the signs and safety rules when around equines.	Making aware of where to stand near and how to approach equines. Visitors to be supervised with equines at all times.	Making people aware of potential risks and teaching safe practice. Inform staff and visitors of the importance of appropriate footwear, etc.	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Always	Always
Animal Handling/Interactions (e.g. ponies, donkey, goats, rabbits, guinea-pigs,	Participants, Visitors, staff – animals can kick, butt, bite, scratch & stand on people	Assessing animals on a regular basis to ensure suitability for activities/interactions. Daily checks on animal's health and wellbeing.	Ensuring all visitors are aware of potential risks and teaching safe practice. Regular reminders throughout sessions/before interacting with any animals.	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Always	Always

chickens, dogs, tortoise)		Regular handling to ensure animals are happy & safe to interact with humans.	No visitors to enter an animal enclosure/stable without the permission/supervision of a member of staff.			
Damaged/barbed wire fencing	Staff, participants and visitors could cut themselves or get a splinter which could lead to infection.	Checking fences on regular basis. Informing staff and visitors of the whereabouts of any barbed wire fencing.	Regular maintenance	Roisin Whyte Geoff Moss	Daily	Daily
Animal breaks free	Staff, participants and members of the public: Pulled/dragged Collision with motor vehicles Tread injuries to feet Bites Kick injuries Knocked over Crushed against wall Trips/falls	Gates to be closed immediately after use Perimeter gates to be kept locked when not in use Only the appropriate staff should attempt to catch a loose pony/donkey	Additional signage Regular checks of gates/fencing	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Ongoing	Ongoing
Weather	Staff and Participants: • Risk of discomfort and possible ill health from exposure to the weather, including sunburn & dehydration in warmer weather; and frostbite, hyperthermia & infections in the cold	Wear suitable clothing for the weather Have a rota in place too, so people are able to take breaks Set up areas of shade if a summer event Have plenty of drinks and water available in hot weather. Heater & hot drinks available in The Snug during colder weather. Use of sheltered areas in heavy rain.	Remind staff, visitors and participants about suitable clothing for weather and make them aware of risks	Roisin Whyte, All Staff Members & visitors/learners	As soon as possible	When necessary

Uneven terrain/pathways	Staff, participants and visitors could fall	Ensuring people are aware of this potential	No	Roisin Whyte & All Staff Members	N/A can only make people aware	N/A
Hay/straw and other flammable materials	Staff, visitors, learners Risk of fire.	Ensure all staff, visitors and learners are aware that smoking is not allowed on site. Fires only allowed in the designated fire pit, supervised by FS lead.	Signage (no smoking, fire action) Inform staff, visitors and learners verbally	Roisin Whyte & All Staff Members	Before session	Each time new staff members, visitors or learners attend.
Ropes, string, electric fence tape	Children Risk of strangulation	Keep ropes tied up when not in use, store string and fence tape out of the way of children Supervision of children		Roisin Whyte & All Staff Members	Continuous	Ongoing
Possible illness – Due to eating or drinking after touching animals/cleaning enclosures or stables, etc.	Staff, visitors & Participants – particularly young children	Antibacterial hand gel available around the paddocks (barn, small animal shed, The Snug). Hand washing facilities in The Snug and toilet area.	Encourage people to wash hands before eating and drinking, after handling the animals and at the end of the sessions. Signs	Roisin Whyte, All staff members & learners/visitors	Throughout sessions	Ongoing
Winter Ice	Staff, visitors and Participants: slipping	Treat critical areas as needed	Warn staff/participants of slippery areas	Roisin Whyte & Staff Members	On arrival	When necessary
Stings & insect/bug bites	Staff, Visitors, participants – Stings from plants/bugs, bites from bugs	- Reminders about appropriate clothing - Verbal reminders to be careful around nettles, etc. - First aid kits	Ensure visitors are wearing clothing that is appropriate to the session. Trim back nettles from pathways. Reminders of particular risks at different times of year (e.g. horse flies/wasps in summer)	Roisin Whyte & Staff members	Ongoing	Ongoing

Pond – Slippery/poorly defined pond edges/banks. Pond location. Inadvertent access. Lack of supervision	Staff, Visitors, Participants: Slips, trips and falls. Cuts and abrasions. Drowning. Injuries / access occur unnoticed.	• Banks shallow and planted to prevent accidental entry • Deepest area is centre of pond (Approx depth – 30-45cm) • Pond regularly maintained to ensure that the perimeter does not become obscured and that the area around the pond does not deteriorate. • Pond is in a fenced off area of the paddocks. • Appropriate level of supervision in place taking into account age of pupils and any special needs • Slip / tripping hazards eliminated from the surrounding area. • Designated areas for pond dipping/viewing (pebbled beach-type area)	• Appropriate warning signs ('No unaccompanied children', 'open water' etc) • Remind staff, visitors and learners verbally of the pond rules (no paddling, no throwing stones, no unsupervised children, etc.)	Roisin Whyte & Staff Members	Ongoing	Ongoing
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Pond - Pond dipping / pond use by pupils	Staff, Visitors, Participants: injury from nets Slips, trips and falls Cuts and abrasions	• Instruction to children regarding use and behaviour • Good visibility for leaders to supervise and monitor whole area used • Avoid use of glass • Young people dipping are spaced well apart • Appropriate clothing for conditions (including hats and sunscreen where necessary) • Designated areas for standing (pebbled beach-type area)	• Verbally remind staff, visitors and learners of safety rules around the pond. • Appropriate signage	Roisin Whyte & Relevant Staff Members	Before & Throughout Pond Dipping Activities	Sessions with access to the pond area
Pond - Hygiene	Staff, Visitors, Participants: infection/disease. Weils disease. Poisoning (blue - green algae)	• Adequate provision for hand washing readily available. • Do not allow children to touch any part of their face with their hands before hands are washed. • Younger children should be seen to wash their hands.	• Verbal reminders throughout any session with access to the pond area.	Roisin Whyte & All Staff Members	Before, throughout and after session.	Sessions with access to the pond area

		• Cuts / abrasions covered with waterproof plaster • No eating in the pond area • Any algae scum should be removed, avoiding skin contact. • Pupils should be supervised carefully so that they have no opportunity to eat any parts of the plants growing in or around the pond.				
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Risk Assessment for EAL Activities

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Grooming the ponies	Staff and participants: • Tread injuries to feet • Bites from pony • Kick injuries • Knocked over	• Supervision by staff at all times • Use of placid ponies • Daily assessment of ponies/donkey's mood, participants capability and	Make sure all staff, participants, visitors and volunteers are given an induction briefing at the start of the session.	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Before session starts	Each time a new staff members, visitors or learners attend, and reminders for long term attendees when required.

	• Crushed against wall • Dust • Allergic reaction	- external factors (e.g. weather) • Matching horse to client ability • Make sure participant is aware of safe behaviour around horses • Make participant aware of correct techniques • Ensure correct footwear worn				
Leading ponies and donkey	Staff and participants: • Tread injuries to feet • Bites from horse • Kick injuries • Knocked over • Crushed against wall • Pulled/dragged • Entangled in equipment • Dust • Allergic reaction	• Supervision by staff at all times • Use of placid ponies • Daily assessment of ponies/donkey's mood, participants capability and external factors (e.g. weather) • Matching horse to client ability • Make sure participant is aware of safe behaviour around horses • Make participant aware of correct techniques • Ensure correct footwear worn	Make sure all staff, participants, visitors and volunteers are given an induction briefing before the activity begins.	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Before activity starts	Each time a new staff members, visitors or learners attend, and reminders for long term attendees when required.
Feeding ponies/donkey	Staff and participants:	• When possible, remain outside the	Make sure all staff, participants, visitors and volunteers are	Roisin Whyte	Before activity starts	Each time a new staff members, visitors or learners

(hay nets and buckets)	• Tread injuries to feet • Bites from horse • Kick injuries • Knocked over • Crushed against wall • Entangled in equipment • Dust • Allergic reaction • Injury, esp. lower back (lifting heavy hay nets)	field or stable when feeding • Ponies & donkey are not to be given treats or fed by hand • Supervision by staff at all times • Use of placid ponies • Daily assessment of ponies/donkey's mood, participants capability and external factors (e.g. weather) • Matching horse to client ability • Make sure participant is aware of safe behaviour around horses • Make participant aware of correct techniques • Ensure correct footwear worn	given an induction briefing before the activity begins.			attend, and reminders for long term attendees when required.
Poo – Picking in paddock	Staff and participants: • Injury, esp. lower back • Tread injuries to feet • Bites from horse • Kick injuries • Knocked over/tripping on uneven ground	• Correct instruction and supervision by staff • Make sure participant is fit enough to undertake task	Remove ponies/donkey from paddock if necessary Mood check of ponies/donkey	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Before participants enter the paddock	When necessary

Moving or building obstacle courses: Using poles, cones, etc.	Staff and Participants: • Injury, esp. lower back • Drop on to foot • Trapped fingers	• Correct instruction and supervision by staff • Ensure sufficient people available	Regular checks of equipment for signs of damage	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Before obstacle course sessions	Ongoing
Leading ponies/donkey on a walk off-site	Staff, public and Participants: • Tread injuries to feet • Bites from horse • Kick injuries • Knocked over • Crushed against wall • Pulled/dragged • Entangled in equipment • Dust • Allergic reaction • trips on uneven ground • contact with public • ponies/donkey being spooked by something unfamiliar	• Supervision by staff at all times • Use of placid ponies • Daily assessment of ponies/donkey's mood, participants capability and external factors (e.g. weather) • Matching horse to client ability • Make sure participant is aware of safe behaviour around horses • Make participant aware of correct techniques • Ensure correct footwear worn • Carry out check of route prior to session • Ensure a minimum of 2 Staff members/appropriate adults	Participants given a safety briefing before activity begins. Both members of staff/appropriate adults to carry mobile phones for emergencies	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Before session/activity	Always
Mucking out stable	Staff and participants:	• Correct instruction and supervision by staff	Have dust masks available	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Always	Before mucking out

	• Injury, esp. lower back • Dust allergies	• Make sure participant is fit enough to undertake task				
Catching pony/donkey from paddock	Staff and participants: • Tread injuries to feet • Bites from horse • Kick injuries • Knocked over • Entangled in equipment	• Supervision by staff at all times • Use of placid ponies • Daily assessment of ponies/donkey's mood, participants capability and external factors (e.g. weather) • Matching horse to client ability • Make sure participant is aware of safe behaviour around horses • Make participant aware of correct techniques • Ensure correct footwear worn	Make sure all staff, participants, visitors and volunteers are given an induction briefing at the start of the activity.	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Make sure all staff, participants, visitors and volunteers are given an induction briefing before going out to catch the pony/donkey	Before activity/reminders when necessary for regular attendees
Turning ponies/donkey back out into the paddock	Staff and participants: • Tread injuries to feet • Bites from horse • Kick injuries • Knocked over • Entangled in equipment	• Supervision by staff at all times • Use of placid ponies • Daily assessment of ponies/donkey's mood, participants capability and external factors (e.g. weather) • Matching horse to client ability • Make sure participant is aware of safe	Make sure all staff, participants, visitors and volunteers are given an induction briefing at the start of the activity.	Roisin Whyte & Appropriate Staff Members	Make sure all staff, participants, visitors and volunteers are given an induction briefing before going out to catch the pony/donkey	Before activity/reminders when necessary for regular attendees

		behaviour around horses • Make participant aware of correct techniques • Ensure correct footwear worn				
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Risk Assessment for Forest School Activities

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	Do you need to do anything else to control this risk?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Falling trees/branches	Visitors/staff/participants – being hit by a falling tree/branch, causing injuries	Trees are inspected regularly and cut back when needed. Avoid area if necessary.	Monitor and review. Additional checks following bad weather (high winds, storms, etc)	Roisin Whyte Geoff Moss	Ongoing	Ongoing
Wasp nests	Visitors/staff/participants – Stings	Inspect paddocks for wasp nests throughout Spring & Summer	Monitor and Review Avoid area or arrange safe removal of any wasp nests found.	Roisin Whyte Geoff Moss	Ongoing throughout Spring/Summer	Spring/Summer
Climbing trees	Staff/Participants – Falls	Safety talk about 3 parts of body on tree at all time, max height, deadwood, Ensure adequate supervision	Regular reminders from staff of how to reduce risk when climbing trees. Supervision by experienced staff members	Roisin Whyte & appropriate staff members	During sessions involving free play and tree climbing	Ongoing

Building dens/shelters	Participants/staff – Hit by falling objects. Splinters/cuts from branches , etc	Safety talk about falling objects.	Ensure appropriate clothing and PPE is worn	Roisin Whyte & appropriate staff members	During sessions involving den building	Ongoing
Collecting Natural materials	Participants/staff – bites, stings, cuts, grazes, lifting injuries	Safety talks around lifting heavy branches, PPE worn, Ensure adequate supervision	Regular reminders of safety given by staff throughout session.	Roisin Whyte & appropriate staff members	During sessions which involve collecting natural materials	Ongoing
Fire lighting/cooking on a fire/extinguishing a fire	Staff/participants – burns	Fire policy and procedures in place. First aid kit on site. Led by Qualified FS leader Constant supervision by staff. Emergency evacuation in place.	Bucket of water to hand to extinguish fire. Fire only to be lit in designated fire pit area. Qualified Staff to carry out ‘on the day’ risk assessment before any fire activities – is the weather suitable for lighting the fire? (too dry/windy could cause fire to spread) Are the participants behaving in a safe manner? (fire to be extinguished if participants do not follow safety rules & guidance)	Roisin Whyte & appropriate staff members	Before and during all sessions involving fire	Ongoing
Tool Use	Staff/Participants – cuts, injuries from tools	Safety tool talks. Appropriate PPE Appropriate ratio of staff: participants	Regular reminders of tool safety given by experienced staff throughout session.	Roisin Whyte & appropriate staff members	During all sessions that involve the use of tools	Ongoing

		Designated tool storage First aid kit on site Tool activities led by a Qualified FS leader	Regular checks and maintenance of tools			
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Notes

- *The original risk assessment was carried out on 3rd October 2022*
- *Roisin Whyte, Owner of The Nurture Paddocks, carries out all risk assessments*
- *This document will be reviewed at least annually*
- *This document will be updated when necessary*
- *Additional risk assessments may be carried out for particular sessions*
- *All new staff should be taken through the risk assessment on induction*
- *All staff to advise participants and visitors of risks where necessary*
- *A Qualified First Aider will be on site during all sessions*
- *This document was reviewed & updated on 3rd September 2023, with the guidance of a Qualified Forest School Leader for the Forest School activities RA.*
- *This document was reviewed & updated on 7th September 2024 as part of an annual review.*
- *This document was reviewed & updated on 7th February 2025 due to a small pond being developed on site.*
- *This document was reviewed & updated on 20th September 2025 due to a change of Trading Name (Was The Pony Paddocks – Now The Nurture Paddocks – Holistic Learning Centre*
- *This document was reviewed and updated on 23rd August 2026 as part of an annual review.*