

Health and Safety Policy

It is the policy of Cambridge Equine Assisted Learning (CEAL) to provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risks to health in the context of equine assisted learning.

The aims of this policy are:

- the elimination of hazards and reduction of risks to prevent harm to CEAL staff, learners and others affected by CEAL operations;
- compliance with relevant legislation and with good practice in the equine assisted learning sector.

Equine Assisted Learning

Equine assisted learning (EAL) and the provision of EAL sessions is a specialist area requiring a range of skills and knowledge about health and safety. Horses are unpredictable, however well handled and it is the responsibility of each individual facilitator to ensure that they have adequately assessed the risks and benefits of working with horses and learners in any given session.

Many learners will not have the capacity to understand how to keep themselves safe.

Responsibilities

This policy applies to all facilitators, staff, learners, premises and activities under the control of CEAL.

CEAL Proprietor, Sophie Keene, is responsible for the overall health and safety policies and procedures within CEAL.

Individual facilitators are responsible for the management of health and safety during their own alternative education sessions including any with animals or ponies.

All CEAL staff and learners are responsible for taking reasonable care that they:

- do not endanger themselves or others
- do not deliberately damage or misuse anything provided for their health and safety
- follow health and safety instructions, regulations and policies
- report faults or dangers
- report accidents and cooperate in any investigation to find causes and prevent a recurrence.

Monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the policy

The policy will be reviewed by CEAL Proprietor, Sophie Keene, or her representative, at least annually and more frequently if there are recommendations for action.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments will be conducted for all activities, projects, trips and events using the six SHELIE areas:

- Staff

- Horses
- Environment
- Learner
- Interaction
- External

Facilitators must ensure that all involved are informed about the risks and precautions to be taken during the equine assisted learning session.

CEAL Annual Review

Health and Safety is one of the sections to be reviewed annually against the EAQ Approved Centre Quality Standards. The relevant part of the standard is included below.

Training

Training on horse awareness, risk assessments and other aspects of health and safety are included during the initial facilitator training course and tutor inductions.

All CEAL facilitators must hold a recognised First Aid Certificate.

Induction information for all new facilitators and staff includes the Health and Safety Policy.

Facilitators must ensure that learners receive adequate training in safe work methods, especially before working with animals, using hazardous machinery, chemicals or equipment.

Communication

Information about health and safety is made available to facilitators using the CEAL website and electronic networks, newsletters and email. Facilitators are responsible for communicating health and safety information to their learners.

CEAL will consult facilitators on matters affecting their health and safety.

Equipment

Equipment should be fit for purpose and maintained in good condition. Before purchasing equipment, chemicals or materials, CEAL considers any risks to health or the environment and make arrangements for safe use, storage and disposal. When selecting equipment, the safety and cost of maintenance and repair is considered and equipment must comply with relevant standards (check with supplier).

For example, using worm egg counts to limit the quantity of wormer required.

Fire safety

CEAL is responsible for fire safety in respect of their premises and activities.

Fire risk assessments is carried out for all buildings.

Individual facilitators are responsible for ensuring that escape routes and exits are kept free of obstructions during sessions and that precautions are taken to eliminate or reduce risk of fire or explosion from activities carried out by facilitators or learners.

All staff and learners are responsible for ensuring that they:

- do not create an uncontrolled fire risk
- do not obstruct fire exit routes or doors

- do not damage or deliberately misuse anything provided for fire safety
- report faults and fire hazards.

Training and information on fire safety arrangements will be provided for learners by individual facilitators. Fire safety awareness is also included in induction information for new facilitators and learners. Fire drills will be arranged annually by the individual facilitator.

Reporting of accidents

Accidents must be recorded in the accident book.

Investigations of accidents to ascertain the cause should be undertaken and recorded.

First aid

All CEAL facilitators must have a recognised First Aid Certificate.

'Emergency First Aider' means someone who has attended a one-day first aid training course within the past three years and who is able to take charge in case of injury/illness, until emergency services arrive.

'First Aider' means someone who has successfully completed a three-day First Aid at Work course and holds a current first aid certificate. Re-qualification training (two days) is needed every three years to keep certificates up to date.

First aiders and Emergency first aiders should also attend annual skills refresh sessions to keep their knowledge and skills up to date between re-qualification training.

Hazardous substances

Hazardous substances include:

- chemicals (such as horse wormers / fly repellent) labelled toxic, harmful, corrosive or irritant
- substantial quantities of airborne dust (eg from hay stacks)
- biological agents
- substances such as crumbed rubber surfacing which emit toxic vapour
- bottled gas.

Plans for work involving these substances must consider risks to health and the environment.

These risks can be eliminated or reduced by substituting a safer substance, using smaller amounts, making sure the area is ventilated, wearing protective clothing, and following suppliers' instructions for use. Always check the labels and manufacturers' data sheets before use.

Significant risks and precautions must be recorded on risk assessment forms. Storage arrangements for flammable or explosive substances, including gases, must be secure and protect from flames, sparks and heat.

Manual handling

When planning any activities involving manual handling, such as assisting learners to get up from a chair, the risk of injury must be considered and precautions taken to eliminate or reduce the risk. Specialist training will be provided for all staff who need to take part in activities which involve manual handling.

Display Screen Equipment

Display screen equipment includes computer screen, PC, Mac, laptop, mouse, printer, tablet, Smart phone

Care should be taken when using display screen equipment regularly and continuously for more than one hour at a time. It is recommended that all display screen users have an annual eye test.

Advice

Advice is taken from the HSE website and H&S professionals. CEAL staff are consulted and asked to assist with the monitoring of health and safety, reporting any recommendations annually during their review or on request at the review of this policy.

Monitoring

Monitoring takes place through:

- individual learner reports after every session
- agenda items on regular CPD and staff meetings
- the Centre's Annual Review.

Associated Policies

There are additional policies and procedures which also refer to health and safety. These include:

- Criminal Records Disclosure Policy
- Lone Working Policy and Procedures
- Recruitment of ex-offenders
- Safeguarding Policy, Children, Young People
- Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Working with Offenders Policy.

	Exceeds expectations all in Meets expectations plus	Meets expectations	Does not meet expectations	
5.1 You have all necessary policies and procedures in place and meet legislative requirements.	The centre is working above the recommended minimum standards outlined in the legislation.	Health and safety policies and procedures are in place and reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary. All legislative requirements are understood and met eg Animal Welfare Regulations, COSHH, Health and Safety at Work, Prevention of Pollution Act, Insurance.	Policies and procedures are in place but are known to a small number of staff. Lack of understanding of what the legislative requirements might be or there is an awareness of what the legislative requirements are but the setting is not meeting these.	

5.2 You conduct risk assessments and health and safety inductions and have sufficient and appropriately trained first aiders.	<p>There is a realistic view of the value of risk to the learners.</p> <p>All facilitators have First Aid training and a current First Aid Certificate.</p>	<p>Risk assessments are conducted up to date, include a date for review and cover the six 'SHELIE' areas: staff, horses, environment, learners, interaction, external as a minimum.</p> <p>Health and safety inductions for learners include observations of horses rather than verbal instructions.</p> <p>The value of dynamic risk assessments is understood.</p> <p>There is at least one First Aider on site at all times.</p>	<p>There is some or no evidence risk assessments have been conducted.</p> <p>Some sessions operate without a First Aider on site.</p>	
5.3 Policies and procedures are regularly monitored and reviewed.	<p>Staff fully understand the content of policies and procedures and why regular review is important.</p> <p>Health and safety is embedded in the culture of the organisation with annual monitoring and review planned and implemented.</p> <p>There are additional reviews in the event of an incident.</p>	<p>Policies and procedures are reviewed annually and there is a date for next review.</p> <p>There is a named Safeguarding Officer who has achieved a recognised safeguarding qualification.</p> <p>There is a named Health and Safety Officer.</p> <p>Incidents are recorded in an Incident Book.</p>	<p>Policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed on an ad hoc basis.</p>	
5.4 There is a culture of continuous improvement.	<p>The culture of continuous improvement is embedded, planned and reviewed eg annual self assessment and review.</p>	<p>Continuous improvement is embedded in the culture.</p>	<p>There is some evidence that continuous improvement is taking place but this happens on an ad hoc basis.</p>	

Proprietor's signature: Sophie Keene

Adopted on: 17th April 2023

Last reviewed on: 16th April 2025

Next review due: 16th April 2026