Health and Safety Policy

Gecko Community

Empower, Inspire, Educate

Contents:

1. Policy Statement and Provision
2. General Guidelines
3. Specific areas pertaining to health and safety:
4. Gecko Community - Health and Safety Policy Covid-19

1. Policy Statement and Provision

Young people at Gecko Community should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Correct Health and safety measures will help them to do this safely.

It is an important part of a young person's development to be able to understand, learn and manage the risks that are a normal part of life.

Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity. Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity. Staff should refer to Health and Safety leads whenever they are unsure. The Health and Safety Lead at Gecko Community is Sarah Rye and all staff are made aware of this and how to contact Sarah. Sarah is available at all times on her mobile.

Staff will be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and young people safe and manage risks effectively.

At some points we may have students on work experience placements through their school or educational setting. In these instances, the school or provision provides a Health and Safety representative who may seek to work alongside Sarah Rye as needed and should keep Gecko Community informed of the student's activities.

From time to time additional measures may need to be introduced to ensure the continued Health and Safety of our Community and in response to either new legal duties and/or specific issues that have arisen. In such cases amendments and/or appendices may be added to this policy. Staff will be updated as needed.

For instance, in 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic has required certain aspects of our practice to be changed or strengthened. Consequently, a Covid-19 Appendix has been included

Key elements of health and safety law:

Sarah Rye is responsible for health and safety, though tasks may be delegated to other staff.

Employees have a duty to look after their own and others' health and safety.

All staff have a responsibility to care for the safety of their colleagues and any other people in contact with Gecko Community.

To meet the requirements of the law and DfE guidance, Gecko Community will implement the following policy.

2. General guidelines

As far as is reasonably practicable, Gecko Community will:

- establish and maintain a safe and healthy environment throughout each place of work;
- make arrangements for ensuring safety and absence of risks to health in connection

with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances;
- ensure that sufficient information, instruction and supervision are available to enable all staff, students and volunteers to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own health and safety;
- ensure all staff access required health and safety training;
- maintain all areas of the workplace (both internal and external) in a condition that is safe and without risk to health;
- provide and maintain means of access to and egress from all places of work that are safe and without risk;
- formulate effective procedures for use in case of fire, and ensure clear, known procedures are in place for evacuating premises if such action is deemed necessary';
- lay down procedures to be followed in case of accident;
- ensure that a thorough system of risk assessments is interwoven into all practice;
- ensure that issues of health and safety are covered within the curriculum accessed by students.

Responsibilities of staff towards students and others in their care

All staff are responsible for the health and safety arrangements in relation to staff, volunteers and students. In particular, they must monitor their own work activities and take all reasonable steps to:

- exercise effective supervision over all those for whom they are responsible;
- be aware of, and implement, safe working practices and set a good example;
- provide the opportunity for discussion of health and safety arrangements;
- investigate any accident (or incident where personal injury could have arisen) and take appropriate corrective action if deemed to be required;
- provide for adequate instruction, information and training in safe working methods within any learning area for which they are responsible;
- ensure that any perceived issue or problem is discussed promptly with the designated person for health and safety.
- ensure that we keep boundaries between ourselves and students and avoid sharing personal information;
- if staff consent to using their mobile phones to speak to parents/carers it is recommended by Gecko that staff use code 333 so that their personal mobile numbers are not available to students;

Responsibilities of students

All students are expected, within their expertise and ability, to:

- exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of their fellow students;
- exercise personal responsibility and respect in their behaviour towards staff
- ensure that to the best of their knowledge, they are in a safe and hazard free environment during sessions

3. **Specific areas pertaining to health and safety:**

Reporting of accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences:

Parents / carers will always be informed of any accident or medical issue pertaining to their child.

The health and safety lead person will decide whether there is a need (see 'First Aid Policy') to make further referral to RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regs).

Safeguarding regulations and procedures are followed at all times and reported to Sarah Rye at the earliest possible opportunity

Occupational health:

It is the responsibility of Gecko Community to ensure that staff are not exposed to workplace stress to a degree that may damage their health. Any indication that this may be the case will be discussed.

Gecko Community will always seek to modify the work environment to reduce that stress or to modify working hours if that appears appropriate and supportive.

Where such action does not reduce workplace stress to an acceptable level (as identified by the member of staff, or by their line manager), then a referral will be made to occupational health to seek medical guidance on the best way forward. Appropriate action will be taken in line with the advice received.

Violence to staff:

Such action will not be tolerated. The organisation has an exclusions policy that details what action will be taken when the rights of any member of the community are transgressed and a Use of Reasonable Force Policy to describe how staff should respond should action be required.

Verbal abuse to staff online:

Such action will not be tolerated. A handover session with Emily Hartley-Heaven The Placement Coordinator and Sarah Rye The Health and Safety lead will take place after a difficult session and is then reviewed and actioned accordingly.

Manual handling:

Staff are not expected to lift or handle heavy or bulky items. If it becomes apparent that such action will be required within a person's required activities, then appropriate training will be sought and provided.

Slips and trips:

Currently, Gecko Community does not have a building. The health and safety representative will ensure that the risk of tripping is kept to an absolute minimum. Risk assessments are carried out for every room and part of the building… such assessments should identify any such risks that exist, assess the likelihood of them occurring and describe action to ameliorate the risk if required.

Regular testing of equipment:

The Health and Safety Lead will ensure that any equipment requiring regular testing will be subject to whatever testing is required to meet guidance or statute. Most obviously all electrical equipment will be tested on an annual basis (PAT testing) and will be marked to indicate that such testing has been carried out.

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are carried out for any extra curricular activities. These may include cooking or making things that require equipment being used. We assess all risks on each activity and carry out a risk assessment for each task.

4. **Gecko Community - Health and Safety Policy Covid-19 Appendix:**

   October 2020

This Appendix to the Health and Safety policy identifies measures being taken to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. You are kindly requested to follow all these rules diligently, to sustain a healthy and safe workplace in this unique environment. It's important that we all respond responsibly and transparently to these health precautions.

This coronavirus (COVID-19) appendix is susceptible to changes with the introduction of additional governmental guidelines.

General hygiene rules:

- Wash your hands after using the toilet, before eating, and if you cough/sneeze into your hands (follow the 20-second hand-washing rule). You can also use the sanitizers you'll find around the office.

- Cough/sneeze into your sleeve, preferably into your elbow. If you use a tissue, discard it properly and clean/sanitize your hands immediately.

- Open the windows regularly to ensure open ventilation.

- Avoid touching your face, particularly eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands to prevent from getting infected.

- If you find yourself coughing/sneezing on a regular basis, or become in any way symptomatic (eg. reduction/loss affecting sense of taste/smell, unusual shortage of breath, high temperature) avoid close physical contact with and take extra precautionary measures such as isolation and testing

- If you have cold symptoms, such as cough/sneezing/fever, or feel poorly, request sick leave or work from home.

- If you have a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, you can return to the office only after you've fully recovered, with a doctor's note confirming your recovery.

Advice to colleagues:

The NHS states:

If you have coronavirus symptoms:

- **a high temperature**
- **a new, continuous cough**
- **a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste**

Get a test and stay at home

If someone tests positive, they must continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms and then return to school only if they do not have symptoms other than cough or loss of sense of smell/taste. This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. The 10-day period starts from the day when they first became ill. If they still have a high temperature, they should keep self-isolating until their temperature returns to normal. Other members of their household should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days.

Schools must send home those people who have been in close contact with the person who has tested positive, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with that person when they were infectious.

Additionally:

- If you are feeling ill, but you are able to work, you can request to work from home if it is practicable for you to do so.

- If you have recently returned from areas with a high number of COVID-19 cases, we'll ask you to work from home for 14 calendar days.

- If you've been in close contact with someone infected by COVID-19, with high

chances of being infected yourself, request work from home. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.

● If you're a parent and you have to stay at home with your children, request work from home. Follow up with your manager or departmental leader to make arrangements and set expectations.

● If you need to provide care to a family member infected by COVID-19, request work from home. You'll only be permitted to return to the office 14 calendar days after your family member has fully recovered, provided that you're asymptomatic or you have a doctor's note confirming you don't have the virus. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.

● All work trips and events will be cancelled/postponed until further notice.

● In-person meetings should be done virtually where possible, especially with non-company parties (e.g. candidate interviews and partners).

● If you are planning to travel voluntarily to a high-risk country with increased COVID-19 cases, we'll ask you to work from home for 14 calendar days. You will also be asked not to come into physical contact with any colleagues during this time.

Policy prepared by Emily Hartley-Heaven: June 2023

Updated: October 2026

Emily Hartley-Heaven
Placement Coordinator and Safeguarding Lead



Renewal Date: October 2027