Woodrow High House
Risk Management Summary
Nov 2025

The benefits to young people of being exposed to managed risk are well known. A visit to Woodrow High House will give young people an opportunity to learn firsthand the thrill and enjoyment of the outdoors and of working together with others, along with the reassurance of our high safety standards. Woodrow High House is operated by The Federation of London Youth Clubs (known as 'London Youth'). We are a registered charity (number 303324) and a registered company limited by guarantee (number 258577).

This document is designed to help those with responsibility for organising visits to fulfil their duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations.and to comply with the advisory documents from the Department for Education (*Health and Safety: Advice on Legal Duties and Powers for local Authorities, School Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies*) and the Health and Safety Executive *(School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities)*.

Safety

All of our activity and learning programmes are operated in accordance with strict operating standards that define the minimum requirements for staff qualifications, supervision arrangements, equipment, facilities and appropriate clothing. We also follow the guidelines provided by the National Governing Bodies ("**NGBs**") for relevant activities operated at Woodrow, e.g. Archery GB (or equivalent).

Individual activities follow a basic session plan. However, our instructors are trained to adapt session plans to meet the varying needs of different individuals and groups provided any changes adhere to existing operating standards and risk assessment control measures. All instructors are regularly observed to ensure they are complying with our safety standards and delivering a quality experience to our visitors. Operating standards also extend to cover our off-site sessions, such as the 'Woodland Walk'.

Risk assessments

Risk Assessments form the building blocks for ensuring effective health and safety management at Woodrow. We operate comprehensive baseline risk assessments for all activities and facilities at Woodrow. The control measures identified in the risk assessment enable us to develop our operating procedures and session plans and are the basis of the training we provide to our staff.

'Dynamic risk assessments' are also undertaken by our staff immediately prior to and during an activity session. This process enables us to consider the particular needs of the group and any local conditions, e.g. the weather. The accompanying staff member may be asked for their input at this stage as they will have greater knowledge of the needs of the individuals taking part.

The organisation planning the trip is responsible for carrying out its own risk assessments for travelling to and from Woodrow and for any excursions/activities away from the Centre, which are not organised by Woodrow staff.

Insurance

London Youth holds public liability insurance of £10,000,000 for any one occurrence. We can provide electronic copies of up-to-date insurance certificates if required.

Staffing Ratios

It is not possible to lay down an exact formula that would apply equally to all the activity sessions that we offer. Ratios will consider the advice given by NGBs, the venue, the hazards and weather

conditions relating to the activity being undertaken, together with a consideration of any special need or authority requirements. However, we apply the following broad principles as a minimum:

a) On-site sessions
An on-site activity group will normally consist of between 10-15 young people. One instructor will instruct one group on most sessions. Sometimes two or three groups are joined together to make one large group. On those occasions it may be deemed safe to operate with a higher ratio of young people to one instructor.

b) Off-site sessions
For off-site walking sessions instructors will carry a two-way radio and/or a mobile phone. Mobile phones are taken on all off-site activities.

c) Groups with additional needs
Once a visiting group informs the Centre of their requirements, an assessment of staffing levels will be made and, where necessary, staffing levels will be increased. Please let us know of your group's needs in advance so we are able to make such plans.

Visiting staff and the instructor ratio

The adult leaders accompanying each group of young people on their visit are expected to support the instructor with the supervision and control of the group. It is worth noting, therefore, that while there may be one instructor with a group of fifteen young people, who will deal with the operation of the activity, the accompanying staff member plays an important role. The instructor to young person ratio may be 1:15 but the ratio of adults to young people typically becomes 2:15

Higher Risk Activities

There are some activities whose very nature presents a greater risk to participants, if not well-controlled. We highlight below some of the specific controls in place for these sessions:

a) Archery
All staff delivering archery sessions hold at least the Archery GB Instructor Award or equivalent.

b) Swimming
When open, the swimming pool is always lifeguarded by a member of staff who holds the Royal Life Saving Society UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification or STA equivalent. Woodrow High House is recognised and certified as an Approved Training Centre by the RLSS.

c) High Ropes
Our High Ropes activities involve participants being belayed from the ground by other participants. All staff who operate these sessions have been trained and assessed to the appropriate standards required. This will either be through the European Ropes Course Association, Mountain Training UK, or internally by the London Youth designated Ropes Technical Expert.

d) Mountain biking and cycle skills
All staff who operate these sessions have been trained and assessed to the appropriate standards required as expected by MIAS (Mountain Bike Instructors Award Scheme) and / or British Cycling. Our cycle sessions are delivered on our site and are fully risk-assessed. We have a designated Cycling Technical Expert to advise our sessions as required.

Other activities
Our activities involving axe throwing, low ropes courses, obstacle courses, teamwork exercises, environmental studies, bushcraft and shelter building do not have specific National Governing Body awards.

However, to ensure our high safety standards also extends to these activities all new staff undergo a comprehensive induction programme where they are trained, observed and assessed to ensure that the instruction they provide meets required standards.

Weather

In the interests of safety, it may on occasion be necessary to cancel or modify certain parts of the agreed programme. This is only likely to occur in the case of very severe weather conditions and particularly in the wooded areas after snow fall or during high winds.

Equipment

Woodrow High House provides the specialist equipment required for activities. All equipment provided is fit for purpose and is checked regularly for defects. The high ropes, low ropes and challenge course structures are inspected annually by an independent specialist contractor.

Trees

Our site is surveyed every 18 months by a qualified arboroculturalist and any tree surgery which is recorded as being essential and/or urgent is carried out.

First aid

All staff working with young people hold a current first aid qualification.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Our Safeguarding Policy requires that DBS checks are carried out on all staff employed at Woodrow. Our staff also receive safeguarding training from London Youth. Except for in an emergency, we do not intend for any of our staff to be in a position whereby they are one to one with a child or young person and are trained to avoid such circumstances arising. We also have a Designated Safeguarding Lead supported by Designated Safeguarding Officers who are trained to manage any safeguarding concerns raised by staff.

Supervising young people during 'down time'

Accompanying staff are *in loco parentis* for the duration of the visit. While instructors are present on activities, it is the group's staff who are solely responsible for supervising the children and young people within their group during the rest of the time.

We operate a 'Duty Instructor' system, which means that a member of our team will always be available to give assistance throughout the stay and is present in the building overnight and on call throughout to deal with emergencies.

Security

The Woodrow grounds are private and in a rural location. The grounds are surrounded by the private grounds of our neighbours and so the only point of access is the driveway from the road.

The following security arrangements are in operation:

- ✓ All visitors to the centre are required to sign in at reception and display a badge and lanyard.
- ✓ Staff are identifiable by their lanyards and many also wear branded uniform items.
- ✓ We have private grounds with no unauthorised public access.
- ✓ A Duty Instructor staffs the building at night and is on call to support visiting staff.
- ✓ We have CCTV monitoring the entrances and approaches to the buildings.
- ✓ The two main entrance doors to the house are controlled by coded access.
- ✓ Staff maintain contact with colleagues using walkie-talkies on all on-site sessions.
- ✓ If certain items need to be stored securely (medication, valuables, etc.) we can provide an area in which to contain them.

Fire Protection

A Fire Risk Assessment has been carried out in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and all necessary arrangements have been put in place. The fire alarm is tested weekly, and we have an established regime for inspection, testing and maintenance of the emergency lighting, automatic detection systems and fire extinguishers.

All our staff have been trained in the execution of the emergency evacuation plan and all our Duty Instructors are also trained as fire marshals. Our fire procedures will be explained to your group during your welcome meeting. A practice fire drill is available to all groups on request.

Recruitment

In line with our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and safety, I would like to reassure you that all our employees undergo thorough verification processes. Here is an overview of the checks that our team members have completed.

- ✓ Photo ID Verification
- ✓ Proof of Address Confirmation
- ✓ Confirmation of Right to Work in the UK
- ✓ Validation of Relevant Qualifications
- ✓ Enhanced DBS check, including a check on the Children’s Barred List for employees working at the outdoor centre
- ✓ Taking up appropriate references for any new employee