

Ambleford School Health and Safety Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review: August 2026 (or sooner if required by regulatory updates)

1. Purpose and Scope

Ambleford School is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for pupils, staff, volunteers, and visitors. This policy applies to all school activities, both on-site and off-site, with particular emphasis on outdoor education. It ensures compliance with the *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*, the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*, the *Children Acts 1989 and 2004*, Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) regulations, Department for Education (DfE) guidance, and *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)*. The policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if there are significant incidents or changes to statutory requirements.

2. Responsibilities

The Directors and the Headteacher hold overall accountability for health and safety across the school. They ensure compliance with all legal duties, allocate sufficient resources for effective safety management, and review both risk assessments and implementation annually.

All staff and volunteers must adhere to the school's health and safety procedures, complete activity-specific risk assessments, and report hazards or incidents immediately to the Directors or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Pupils and visitors are expected to follow safety rules and must report potential hazards to staff without delay.

3. Risk Assessment

Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out before every activity. These assessments take into account weather conditions such as extreme heat, storms, or high winds; terrain risks including slippery or unstable surfaces; the proximity of water bodies; and potential wildlife encounters. The safe use of specific tools and equipment such as knives and saws is considered, alongside participant-specific factors such as age, medical conditions, and additional needs. Risk assessments are documented, reviewed regularly, and adapted where circumstances change.

4. First Aid and Medical Emergencies

A fully stocked first aid kit is available at all times during School and Forest School sessions. At least one staff member present must hold an up-to-date Paediatric First Aid certificate. The school keeps records of all medical conditions, allergies, and emergency contacts for every participant. In the event of an injury or medical emergency, appropriate first aid is administered, parents or guardians are informed promptly, and a detailed incident report is completed.

5. Clothing and Equipment

All participants are expected to wear suitable clothing for outdoor learning. This includes waterproof jackets, long trousers, and sturdy footwear, with seasonal adaptations such as gloves, sun hats, or thermal layers as required. All tools and equipment must be used only under direct supervision, stored securely when not in use, and checked regularly for safety and maintenance.

6. Fire Safety

Fires are only permitted in designated areas and must be supervised by a qualified member of staff. A water supply or fire extinguisher must always be present at fire sites. Pupils are taught safe practices in fire-building, fire management, and extinguishing procedures, as well as emergency responses in the event of fire.

7. Wildlife Awareness

Participants are educated about local wildlife and the potential risks associated with animals, insects, and plants. Staff are trained to manage wildlife encounters safely and to minimise risk. Preventative measures are taken to avoid unnecessary animal interactions, and staff are prepared to respond appropriately to allergic reactions, stings, or bites. Pupils are taught not to feed, chase, or disturb wildlife.

8. Hygiene and Food Safety

Hygiene is promoted at all times, and handwashing facilities or sanitiser stations are made available during all sessions. All food must be stored correctly to prevent contamination, prepared in a clean environment, and cooked and consumed following safe food-handling procedures. Safe drinking water is provided at all times either from a container brought to site or from the standpipe.

9. Missing Persons Protocol

A current participant list is maintained for each session, and headcounts are carried out at regular intervals and recorded no less than 3 times over the day. If a child or vulnerable person goes missing, staff immediately search the surrounding area. If the individual is not found within ten minutes, the DSL, Headteacher, and emergency services are notified, and parents or guardians are contacted without delay. Please see the Missing Child policy for further details.

10. Reporting and Review

All accidents, incidents, and near-misses are recorded promptly and submitted to the Directors. Records are monitored to identify patterns or recurring issues, and findings inform improvements to practice. Regular safety audits are conducted, and necessary adjustments are made. The policy is formally reviewed every year, or immediately after any major health and safety event.

11. Emergency Procedures

All staff and pupils are briefed on emergency evacuation routes and assembly points. Staff must carry a reliable means of communication, such as a mobile phone or radio, during all activities. Emergency plans cover fire evacuation, medical emergencies, missing children, and extreme weather contingencies. Staff rehearse these procedures periodically to ensure readiness.

12. Staff Training and Induction

Health and safety training is mandatory for all staff and volunteers and includes risk assessment, first aid, emergency response, fire safety, and the safe handling of tools and equipment. New staff and volunteers complete a full induction before assisting with any activity. Training is refreshed regularly and updated in response to emerging risks or changes in regulation.

13. Visitor Safety Protocols

All visitors must sign in at reception, wear an identification badge in a red lanyard, and be briefed on safety procedures before entering learning areas. Visitors are supervised at all times and are not permitted unsupervised access to pupils.

14. Child Protection and Safeguarding

The welfare of pupils remains the highest priority in all activities. All staff and volunteers must undergo an Enhanced DBS check and complete safeguarding training in line with *KCSIE 2025*. Any safeguarding concerns identified during activities must be reported immediately to the DSL. Staff are expected to recognise that some health and safety matters, such as unexplained injuries, neglect, or repeated accidents, may constitute safeguarding issues and must be managed accordingly. Please refer to the Safeguarding policy for further details.

15. Environmental Responsibility

Ambleford School is committed to environmental stewardship. Activities are planned to minimise environmental impact, and pupils are taught to respect and protect natural habitats. Leave No Trace principles are followed, including correct waste disposal, careful use of natural resources, and the avoidance of unnecessary disturbance to plants and wildlife.

16. Policy Availability

This Health and Safety Policy is published on the school website and available in print upon request. All staff, volunteers, and parents are expected to familiarise themselves with its contents. Pupils are given age-appropriate guidance on health and safety expectations.

Conclusion

By adhering to this Health and Safety Policy, Ambleford School ensures that every pupil, member of staff, volunteer, and visitor participates in a safe, enriching, and legally compliant environment. Our approach combines rigorous health and safety standards with a strong culture of care, safeguarding, and respect for the natural world.