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Table of contents:	1 Policy Statement 2 Health & Safety Responsibilities and Delegation of Tasks 3 Key Health & Safety Arrangements <i>3.1 Accident, Injury and Dangerous Occurrence Reporting</i> <i>3.2 Accident Procedure</i> <i>3.3 Consultation and Communication</i> <i>3.4 Contractors / Workmen</i> <i>3.5 Control of Hazardous substances (COSHH)</i> <i>3.6 Display Screen Equipment</i> <i>3.7 Electrical Equipment</i> <i>3.8 Evacuation Procedure</i> <i>3.9 Fire Safety</i> <i>3.10 Lone Working</i> <i>3.11 Manual Handling Operations</i> <i>3.12 New and Expectant Mothers at Work</i> <i>3.13 Office, Classroom and Workplace Safety</i> <i>3.14 Outdoor Activities</i> <i>3.15 Risk Assessments</i> <i>3.16 Safe Learner</i> <i>3.17 Safety Training</i> <i>3.18 Sports Activities</i> <i>3.19 Snow and Ice Clearance</i> <i>3.20 Trips, Visits and Events</i> <i>3.21 Violence and Aggression</i> <i>3.22 Visitors</i> <i>3.23 Work Equipment</i> <i>3.24 Workplace Inspections</i> <i>3.25 Work-Related Stress</i>	

Substantive changes since last review:	<i>Jan 2026:</i> Streamlined policy statement, replaced 'responsibilities' section with scheme of delegation, updated staff roles, addition of points of crossover with Church Partners.
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Health and Safety Policy

1 Policy Statement

Acorn AP is committed to meeting its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and associated legislation. Working together with our Partner Churches (the premises owners), the organisation will provide a safe working and learning environment, implement suitable controls, provide information and training, and ensure continual improvement through monitoring and review.

2 Health & Safety Responsibilities and Delegation of Tasks

2.1 Purpose

This Scheme of Delegation sets out how health and safety responsibilities are allocated throughout the organisation. Its aim is to ensure:

- Clear accountability at all levels
- Safe working practices and legal compliance
- Effective risk management and incident response.

2.2.1 Acorn AP Board of Trustees

Accountability: Overall organisational responsibility for health & safety.

Key Responsibilities:

- Approve the organisation's Health & Safety Policy
- Ensure adequate resources (staffing, training, budget)
- Receive regular reports on H&S performance and risks
- Monitor compliance with legislation and strategic risk controls.

2.2.2 Director of Operations

Delegated Authority: Operational responsibility for ensuring health & safety arrangements are implemented.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure the organisation meets its statutory duties
- Maintain and update H&S policies and procedures
- Liaise with key personnel with responsibility for H&S within Partner Churches
- Provide H&S training and ensure staff competence
- Advise on risk assessments and control measures
- Promote a strong H&S culture
- Ensure senior managers have clear duties and adequate resources
- Monitor compliance (oversee local site inspections, audits)
- Coordinate incident investigations
- Report significant risks or incidents to the Board.

2.2.3 Health and Safety Advisor (AM Safety Services Ltd.)

Delegated Authority: Technical and professional support. Acts as the competent person under Regulation 7 of MHSWR 1999, advising the Director of Operations and

the Board of Trustees on legal compliance, assisting with investigations, and supporting risk assessment processes.

2.2.4 Heads of Centre – Senior Leaders

Delegated Authority: Responsible for H&S within their Centres and day-to-day responsibility for teams.

Responsibilities:

- Implement H&S policy and procedures locally
- Conduct routine site inspections
- Report faults, defects with building to Church Partner
- Ensure staff follow safe systems of work
- Identify, manage, and monitor risks within their areas
- Ensure risk assessments are completed and reviewed
- Report hazards, incidents, and near misses
- Investigate incidents and escalate serious issues
- Ensure staff receive required training and equipment
- Provide local inductions for new starters.

2.2.5 All Employees

Delegated Authority: Responsibility for following instructions and working safely.

Responsibilities:

- Comply with all H&S policies and procedures
- Use equipment safely and report defects
- Participate in training
- Report hazards, incidents, or concerns promptly.

2.3 Reporting and Escalation

- **All Employees → Heads of Centre:** hazards, near misses, minor incidents
- **Heads of Centre → Director of Operations:** major incidents, significant risks
- **Director of Operations → Acorn AP Trustees:** strategic risks, annual H&S performance, RIDDOR reports.

2.4 Monitoring and Review

- Routine inspections carried out by Heads of Centre
- Annual H&S audit led by Director of Operations
- Termly reports to the Acorn AP Trustees and Church Partner
- Scheme reviewed annually or following major organisational changes.

3 Key Health and Safety Arrangements

3.1 Accident, Injury and Dangerous Occurrence Reporting

- It is the policy of Acorn AP to comply with RIDDOR 2013.
- Any accident resulting in injury or 'near miss', or the administration of first aid, should be recorded in the first aid accident book.

- Staff should always investigate to identify the root cause of the incident, determine whether any safety measures failed and to implement corrective actions to prevent future recurrence.
- For any non-minor incidents, the Head of Centre will inform the Director of Operations immediately (who will share the information with the Church Partner as appropriate).
- An investigation report may be required.
- All completed investigation reports will be kept by the Director of Operations.
- The Head of Centre, on behalf of the Directors, is responsible for reporting all RIDDOR reportable incidents to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). All such reports will be made under the direction and guidance of the Health and Safety Advisor.

3.2 First Aid

- First aid should be administered by a qualified first aider only.
- At least 2 Acorn AP staff are trained as First Aiders in each Centre.
- Where doubt exists as to the severity of an incident, the emergency services should be called.
- Emergency telephone numbers will be held by the Head of Centre and available in the staff office, where applicable.
- Please see local first aid posters and policies details of first aid responsibilities and locations of first aid boxes.

3.3 Consultation and Communication

- Communication between staff at all levels and with the local church partner is an essential part of effective health and safety management.
- The Church Partner will identify a key point of contact to whom any building-related H&S concerns should be addressed.
- Acorn Directors will communicate their commitment to safety orally, in writing and by example, both informally and formally through the implementation of H&S processes.
- Consultation will be facilitated through team meetings and termly partnership meetings with the Partner Church.
- Employees should refer issues to the Head of Centre in the first instance and can escalate to the Director of Operations if necessary.

3.4 Contractors / Workmen

The Church Partner is responsible for managing the health and safety of all contractors/workers on site. Wherever possible, contractor visits should be arranged for times when the Centre is not open to young people, and all contractors/workers should be supervised during their first visit.

3.5 Control of Hazardous Substances (COSHH)

It is the policy of Acorn AP to work with the Church Partner to comply with COSHH regulations 2002.

It is our policy to eliminate the need for hazardous substances in our Centres so our staff and service users do not come into contact with them. Where hazardous substances are used by church staff (e.g. for cleaning and maintenance), this is controlled and managed by the church partner. Regular checks are made to ensure that any hazardous substances used by church staff are not left in the Centre and are kept in an area inaccessible to Acorn staff and members of the public.

Our church partners conduct a risk assessment of all work involving exposure to hazardous substances. The assessment will be based on manufacturers and suppliers' health and safety guidance and their own knowledge of the work process.

Assessments will be reviewed periodically, whenever there is a substantial modification to the work process and if there is any reason to suspect that the assessment may no longer be valid.

3.6 Display Screen Equipment

- It is the policy of Acorn AP to comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.
- Acorn AP will conduct a risk assessment of any employees using VDU screens as a significant part of their job. The risks to users of VDU screens will be reduced to the lowest extent reasonably practicable.
- VDU screen users will be encouraged to take periodic breaks in their work.
- All VDU screen users will be given appropriate and adequate training on the health and safety aspects of this type of work and will be given further training and information whenever the organisation of the workstation is substantially modified. For more information, please see HSEI guidelines for working in an office environment and using VDUs.

3.7 Electrical Equipment

- All electrical equipment must be used only for its intended purpose.
- Acorn AP adopts a routine of testing portable equipment (PAT Testing) based on equipment type and usage.
- Users of portable equipment should undertake a visual check before each use.

3.8 Evacuation Procedure

- In the event of a fire alarm being activated or in any other emergency situation, all persons must leave the building by the nearest available exit and assemble at the designated assembly point. (See local fire procedures for detailed information).
- The centre Fire Marshall will supervise evacuation and liaise with the emergency services.
- Acorn staff are responsible for the safe evacuation of young people in their group and must carry out a roll call at the assembly point to ensure all young

¹ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm>

people are accounted for and report their findings to the Centre Fire Marshall. Likewise, Heads of Centre must carry out a roll call of their staff on site, as well as any visitors recorded in the visitors' book, to ensure all staff and visitors are accounted for and report their findings to the Centre Fire Marshall.

3.9 Fire Safety

- All employees must ensure they have read and understood the organisation's fire procedure.
- The Director of Operations will ensure the Church Partner has carried out a fire risk assessment for all premises. Implementation of any recommendations is the responsibility of the Church Partner (premises owner).
- Acorn AP will agree with the Church Partner who is responsible for ensuring the maintenance and testing of fire alarms and fire-fighting equipment. The actual maintenance of the equipment will be the subject of an annual contract with a specialist firm.
- All persons on the premises have a duty to report immediately any fire, smoke, or potential fire hazards by using a fire alarm or reporting to a senior member of staff.
- All employees have the duty to conduct their operations in such a way as to minimise the risk of fire. This involves keeping combustible materials separate from sources of ignition and avoiding unnecessary accumulation of combustible materials.
- Smoking is not permitted in any of the Acorn AP Centres. Smoking outside the buildings but on Acorn premises must be supervised and appropriate disposal facilities provided.
- Heads of Centre are responsible for keeping their areas safe from fire and ensuring their staff are trained in proper fire prevention practices and emergency procedures.

Fire Detection Equipment

- Fire detection systems, including smoke detectors and alarms are in operation at all of our centres.

Fire Fighting Equipment

- Fire extinguishers are located at strategic points throughout the buildings to aid evacuation.
- Employees are not expected to tackle a fire themselves unless it is safe to do so. If the situation is potentially dangerous the employee should activate the alarm and evacuate the building immediately.

Fire Doors

- Fire Doors are designed to slow the spread of fire and smoke throughout the building. Fire doors are designed to close automatically and must never be blocked, jammed, or tied open.

Fire Exits

- Fire exits are located at strategic points.
- Exit doors must never be locked, blocked, or used as storage space.
- In the event of the fire alarm sounding, employees, students, and visitors must exit the building by the nearest exterior door.
- Where buildings have no natural light or are used after dark, emergency lighting will have been installed in exit corridors and above emergency exit doors.
- A lift should never be used in the case of an emergency evacuation.

Fire Drills

- Practice fire drills will be carried out during student induction and thereafter at least every half term in Acorn AP Centres, to ensure employees' and students' familiarity with emergency evacuation procedures.
- Fire drills will be the responsibility of the Head of Centre.

3.10 Lone Working

- If any employee is required to work on their own on Acorn AP premises outside of normal working hours, they must ensure that they inform someone (not necessarily another employee) when they arrive and when they leave. If there are concerns over the safety of an employee at Acorn premises a member of staff should be contacted and if necessary, the police. For more guidelines on working alone on and off site, see the Lone Working policy.
- If in the duration of your role at Acorn AP you are required to work on your own with a young person or vulnerable adult, you must first have read and understood the Lone Working Policy and follow the guidelines as outlined.

3.11 Manual Handling Operations

- It is the policy of Acorn AP to comply with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.
- Manual handling Operations will be avoided as far as is reasonably practicable where there is a risk of injury.
- Where it is not possible to avoid manual handling operations a risk assessment of the operation will be made taking into account the task, the individual, the load, and the environment.
- All possible steps will be taken to reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level possible, including Manual Handling training where appropriate. For more information on manual handling please see HSE guidelines on manual handling.

3.12 New and Expectant Mothers at Work

- Employees that are pregnant should inform their line manager who will ensure a New and Expectant Mothers risk assessment is carried out.
- A New and Expectant Mothers risk assessment must also be carried out where any young person or volunteer inform staff that they are pregnant.
- Heads of Centre should seek advice from the Director of Operations on completing this.

3.13 Office, Classroom and Workspace Safety

- Offices and classrooms, though generally regarded as low-risk areas, still present their own risks to health and safety.
- Staff concerned about the working environment (temperature, lighting etc.), facilities (toilets, eating, washing, changing etc.), cleaning or general safety should advise their Head of Centre of their concerns.
- Heads of Centre should seek advice from the Director of Operations and the Health and Safety Advisor if required, and arrange for a specific risk assessment to be completed and resulting action taken.

3.14 Outdoor Activities

- Any adventurous activities such as caving, climbing, canoeing, sailing etc. must be organised and led by qualified third-party instructors.
- Other less adventurous outdoor activities such as walking, field trips etc. should have a relevant risk assessment carried out prior to the activity taking place and the activity be approved by Acorn Directors.
- For further information see the Trips and Visits Policy.

3.15 Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments will be carried out for all activities that are undertaken. Any resulting actions will be implemented and staff informed and where necessary will receive appropriate training.
- Risk assessments will be reviewed at least annually and following any changes to the activity or environment by the Head of Centre at a local level or the Director of Operations or Health and Safety Advisor at a national level.
- For any new activities to be undertaken, a risk assessment will be carried out, actions implemented, and the risk assessment approved by an Acorn AP Director or Health and Safety Advisor (whichever is appropriate) before the activity is carried out.
- Acorn AP will work with the Church Partner to ensure the use of the building and interaction with other building users is risk assessed as appropriate.

3.16 Safe Learner

- Acorn AP is committed to the Safe Learner principles. It is the duty of Acorn AP and its entire staff to ensure that the learning environment and all activities are safe and unlikely to cause harm.
- Learners are to be inducted and consulted with regard to their Health, Safety, and well-being.

3.17 Safety Training

- Safety training is regarded as an indispensable ingredient of an effective health and safety programme. It is essential that every member of staff in the organisation is trained to perform his or her job effectively and safely.
- Acorn AP will ensure all employees are trained in safe working practices and procedures prior to being allocated a role.
- Training needs will be identified at individual reviews or at departmental meetings.

3.18 Sports Activities

- All sport activities must be led by a competent person.
- A risk assessment will be conducted on the sport activities to be carried out and the premises / facilities to be used.

3.19 Snow and Ice Clearance

- In the event of snowfall or icy conditions, where practicable, the Head of Centre, together with the Church Partner, will arrange for someone to clear a path from the main road to the doors into the premises and treat it with a mixture of sand and salt. Paths into all buildings should be cleared and treated as above.
- Once recognised paths have been created, every effort must be made to maintain them in a safe condition.

3.20 Trips, Visits and Events

- Trips, Visits and Events involving students and employees hold potential health and safety hazards. All such activities must have a properly completed risk assessment before the activity can then be approved by the Directors.
- Please see the Trips & Visits Policy.

3.21 Violence and Aggression

- Violence can include physical, verbal, sexual, racial, or threatening behaviour by a colleague, student, parent/carer/guardian, or member of the public.
- Strict guidelines apply to these sorts of incidents, and they must be reported to the Head of Centre and Directors and recorded as serious incidents on the CPOMS system.
- If a student carries out a physical assault on a member of staff, another staff member (where possible, the Head of Centre) must remove the student from the situation until the matter is resolved.
- The member of staff assaulted must complete a report of the incident and provide a medical statement should they suffer actual bodily harm.
- Police should always be informed in the case of a serious assault.
- For further information please see the Behaviour Policy.

3.22 Visitors

- Visitors to the Acorn AP premises will report to the main reception or main doors of smaller centres. They will be asked to sign in and given a suitable badge/label to identify them as a visitor. Visitors will be asked to sign out on their departure.
- All visitors must be made aware of the procedure to take in case of the fire alarm sounding.

3.23 Work Equipment

- It is the policy of Acorn AP to comply with the Provision and Use of work equipment regulations (PUWER) 1998.

- Acorn AP will endeavour to ensure that all equipment used in the buildings is safe and suitable for the purpose for which it is used.
- All staff will be provided with adequate information and training to enable them to use work equipment safely.
- The use of any work equipment which could pose a risk to the well-being of persons in or around the premises will be restricted to authorised persons.
- All work equipment will be clearly marked with health and safety warnings where appropriate.

3.24 Workplace Inspections

- It is the policy of Acorn AP to comply with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.
- Inspections of the premises will be carried out termly by the Head of Centre to ensure safe practices and premises.
- Any actions resulting from an inspection must be implemented as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Any change in practices resulting from an inspection will be communicated to staff immediately and necessary training given.

3.25 Work-Related Stress

- Risk assessments should include consideration and identification of possible workplace stressors.
- Measures to eliminate, reduce or control risks from stress will be implemented in line with the HSE Management Standards for Work-Related Stress.
- For more information, please see HSE guidelines for reducing work-related stress.