



Safety, Health and Welfare Statement 2025/26

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Designated Safeguarding Lead
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POLICY REVISION RECORD (annual reviews)

Date	Section	Revision	Updated by
15/08/22			Karen Pickles
10/09/23	Re-written policy	Re-styled to include all above as required and revised	Karen Pickles
01/09/24		Reviewed	Karen Pickles
01/09/25		Reviewed and updated	Karen Pickles

Aims and Objectives (2025)

This document outlines the **Safety, Health & Welfare Policy** for *Berkeley Guardians* and specifies the provisions in place to meet the policy's aims.

Aims

To ensure full compliance with the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005**, including any amendments or relevant legislation applicable in 2025.

Objectives

To maintain a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for:

- Children under our care
- Employees (including office staff, Guardian Angels, and host families)
- Parents, pupils, and visitors

Note: Berkeley Guardians does not operate from a fixed office base. Therefore, this policy serves as a framework of best practice, particularly for host families providing homestay accommodation.

Commitments

Berkeley Guardians is committed, as far as reasonably practicable, to providing:

- A safe and hazard-free working and living environment
- Safe access to and exit from all premises
- Safe and well-maintained equipment
- Safe systems of work
- Clear and relevant information, training, and supervision
- Protective equipment where necessary
- Emergency planning and procedures

Shared Responsibility

The effectiveness of this policy depends on the cooperation of all employees and homestay providers. Everyone is expected to read, understand, and uphold the principles outlined in this policy.

This statement will be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in legislation or operational experience.

Safe Systems of Work

Berkeley Guardians is committed to ensuring that all tasks are appropriate to the skills, training, and capacity of our team members.

Principles

- Systems of work are designed with safety and ergonomics in mind.
- Training is provided to highlight areas requiring special care and attention.
- Before purchasing new equipment or modifying existing systems, employees will assess potential risks to ensure safety and suitability.

Systems of work will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Upon request by any employee, host family, or parent
- Following any incident or near-miss

Duties of the Employer

Berkeley Guardians recognises its duty to protect the safety, health, and welfare of all employees and associated individuals.

Employer Responsibilities

- Conduct all work activities in a manner that safeguards health and safety
- Prevent improper conduct or behaviour that could endanger others
- Provide appropriate training, supervision, and resources to support safe working practices
- Monitor and evaluate health and safety performance regularly
- Ensure that the place of work is maintained in a condition that is safe and without risk to health.
- Ensure that the place of work has a safe means of entering and exiting.
- Ensure all fire exits are not blocked and all employees, parents and contractors know where they are positioned.
- Provide systems of work that are planned, organised, preformed, maintained, and revised as appropriate.
- Provide and maintain facilities and arrangements for the welfare of all employees at work.
- Provided appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision necessary, as far as is reasonable to, all employees.
- Where risks cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled, provide and maintain such suitable protective clothing and equipment as is necessary to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all employees.
- Prepare and revise, as appropriate, adequate plans and procedures to be followed and measures to be taken in case of emergency or serious and imminent danger.
- Report accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Authority

- Ensure that any measures taken in relation to health, safety and welfare at work do not involve financial cost to any employee.

Duties of Employees:

It shall be the duty of every employee whilst at work:

- To take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions while at work
- Ensure that he/she is not under the influence of an intoxicant to the extent that he/she is in such a state as to endanger his/her own safety, health or welfare or that of others.
- If reasonable required by your employer, submit to any appropriate, reasonable and proportionate test for intoxicants by, or under the supervision of, a registered medical practitioner
- To co-operate with his/her employer and any other persons to such an extent as will enable his/her employer and any other person to comply with any other relevant statutory provision
- Not engage in improper conduct or other behaviour that is likely to endanger his/her own safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person/child
- Attend any relevant training relating to health, safety and welfare or relating to work carried out
- Having regard to his/her training and the instructions given by his/her employer, make correct use of any article or substance provided for use by the employee at work or for the protection of his/her safety, health and welfare, including protective clothing or equipment
- To report to their manager any defects in equipment which might cause a hazard
- Report to the manager any work being carried on, or likely to be carried on, in a manner which may endanger the safety, health and welfare at work of the employee or that of others
- Report to the manager any defects in the place and systems of work, any article or substance which might endanger the health, safety and welfare of the employee or others
- Report to the manager any contravention of the relevant statutory provisions which may endanger the safety, health, and welfare at work of the employee or others
- An employee shall not, on entering into a contract of employment, misrepresent him/herself to the employer with regard to the level of health and safety training they have received
- An employee shall not intentionally, recklessly or without reasonable cause, interfere with, misuse or damage any property of Berkeley Guardians

Instruction and Training

Berkeley Guardians recognises that effective instruction and training are essential to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all individuals involved in its operations.

General Expectations

All employees are expected to actively participate in training programmes provided. Certain roles and tasks require strict adherence to safety procedures, and employees undertaking such tasks will receive specific instructions. No employee should engage in any potentially hazardous activity without appropriate training and guidance.

Training as a Development Tool

Training is considered a vital component of both individual development and organisational growth. Berkeley Guardians provides opportunities for employees to enhance their skills, particularly in the following contexts:

- Introduction of new work equipment or systems
- Changes to existing equipment or procedures
- Adoption of new technologies

Where practicable, time for training is incorporated into employees' schedules. External training courses may be funded, and employees are encouraged to attend relevant sessions to support their professional development.

Legal Compliance

In accordance with the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005**, Berkeley Guardians ensures that:

- Training and instruction are delivered in a format and language that is accessible and comprehensible to each employee
- Employees' physical capabilities are considered when assigning tasks (e.g. staff with back pain will not be asked to move heavy furniture)

Induction and Ongoing Training

All new employees receive induction training that includes:

- Familiarisation with their job description and responsibilities
- Introduction to codes of practice and operational procedures
- Overview of health and safety policies and expectations

In-service training is also provided to ensure that employees remain informed about updates to procedures, equipment, and safety standards.

Third-Party Employment

Any individual working for Berkeley Guardians while employed by another organisation will be given appropriate instructions regarding any risks to their safety, health, and welfare in that external workplace.

Responsibility for Instruction

The Directors of Berkeley Guardians are responsible for ensuring that all training and instruction are appropriately planned, delivered, and monitored.

Stress

Berkeley Guardians acknowledges the potential for stress in roles involving the care and supervision of young people and is committed to minimising its impact on employees and pupils/students.

Prevention of Overload

Care is taken to ensure that individuals are not assigned tasks that exceed their skills or capacity, thereby avoiding qualitative overload. This applies to all employees and students involved in our programmes.

Recognised Stress Factors

Berkeley Guardians recognises that stress may arise when individuals:

- Are unable or unwilling to delegate responsibilities
- Lack clarity around their role or responsibilities
- Feel unable to decline additional tasks due to fear of negative consequences or urgency

Recruitment and Support

During recruitment, careful consideration is given to the suitability of candidates for their roles. Ongoing support is provided through regular meetings involving management, employees, and pupils, where concerns, methods, and experiences are discussed openly. These meetings aim to foster understanding and provide practical solutions to reduce stress.

Principles for a Healthy Work Environment

To promote a satisfied, efficient, and motivated workforce, Berkeley Guardians adheres to the following principles:

- Keeping employees informed of organisational developments and progress
- Ensuring fairness and transparency in decision-making
- Recognising the dynamics of small group psychology and encouraging team harmony
- Supporting professional development wherever practicable
- Promoting responsible attitudes and self-management
- Using feedback as a tool to alleviate stress

Feedback Mechanisms

Two primary forms of feedback are used to support employee wellbeing:

- Recognition: Acknowledging good performance and effort, with emphasis on personal qualities that contribute to success
- Constructive Criticism: Providing feedback aimed at improving performance without diminishing motivation or morale

Emergencies and Dangers

Berkeley Guardians takes the safety of its employees, students, and homestay providers seriously and has established procedures to manage emergencies and imminent dangers in accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Emergency Preparedness

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that the following measures are in place:

- Adequate provision for First Aid, fire drills, and evacuation procedures
- Established contact with relevant emergency services, including fire, medical, and rescue services
- Designation of employees to specific safety roles, such as Health and Safety Officer, with appropriate training and access to necessary equipment

Response to Emergencies

In the event of a serious and imminent danger, the employer or manager must:

- Inform all affected employees of the nature of the risk and the protective steps to be taken
- Prevent employees from resuming work in areas where danger remains
- Ensure that employees can take appropriate action to protect themselves if guidance is unavailable or their supervisor cannot be reached

Access to areas with specific, serious dangers must be restricted to employees who have received appropriate instructions and training.

Bullying in the Work Place:

Bullying is a health and safety issue and is considered a workplace hazard which must be treated within the Safety Management System. A risk assessment will be carried out to eliminate or reduce the risk of its consequences should it occur.

Employees have a responsibility to ensure that they are not contributing to a bullying culture and to take reasonable care for his/her own safety, health and welfare and that of any other person who may be affected by his/her own acts or omissions while at work.

The Director shall be alert to the possibility of bullying behaviour and be familiar with the policies and procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying.

Accident Prevention:

Berkeley Guardians will have frequent meetings with regard to accident prevention. It is the policy of Berkeley Guardians to promote the health, well being and personal safety of all pupils, students, adults and volunteers involved in our service, through developing and regularly reviewing accident prevention procedures and fire safety procedures.

However, we are aware that accidents may occur regardless of how vigilant we are and therefore we have set up an accident investigation procedure. We investigate all accidents for a number of reasons including:

- We may have statutory obligation we need to identify
- Information needs to be gathered so that suitable remedial action may be taken
- A report will be required for the insurance company if necessary
- A parent (if a child has been involved) has a right to know what has happened
- A record is kept for future analysis

Accident Prevention

Berkeley Guardians is committed to promoting the health, wellbeing, and personal safety of all pupils, students, employees, and volunteers involved in our service. To support this commitment, regular meetings are held to review and improve accident prevention and fire safety procedures.

Preventative Measures

Accident prevention is a core component of our health and safety strategy. Procedures are developed and reviewed to:

- Identify and mitigate potential hazards
- Promote safe practices across all areas of operation
- Ensure fire safety protocols are understood and implemented

Despite our best efforts, we acknowledge that accidents may still occur. Therefore, a structured accident investigation procedure is in place to ensure appropriate follow-up and accountability.

Accident Investigation

All accidents are investigated thoroughly for the following reasons:

- To meet any statutory obligations
- To gather information for implementing remedial actions
- To provide necessary documentation for insurance purposes
- To inform parents or guardians when a child is involved
- To maintain records for future analysis and prevention

Required Information in an Accident Report

Each accident investigation report must include the following details:

Category	Details Required
Injured Person	Full name and address
Age	Age of the individual
Duration with Berkeley Guardians	How long they have been involved with the organisation
Nature of Injury	Description of injuries sustained
First Aid	Whether first aid was administered and by whom
Hospitalisation	Whether they were taken to hospital and if detained
Location	Exact location of the incident
Date and Time	When the incident occurred
Environmental Conditions	Weather (if outdoors) and lighting at the scene
Incident Description	Detailed account of what happened
Witnesses	Names and contact details of any witnesses
Photographic Evidence	Whether photographs were taken
Number of People Present	Count of children and adults present at the time

All reports are securely stored and reviewed periodically to identify trends and improve safety measures.

There is a detailed Report Sheet available to all employees - see GDoc file for staff

Fire and Evacuation

Berkeley Guardians does not currently operate from a fixed office location. As such, formal fire detection and evacuation procedures do not apply in the conventional sense. However, host families and staff are encouraged to follow best practice guidelines to ensure safety within homestay environments.

Fire Safety Provisions

- **Fire Detection Equipment:** Not applicable to Berkeley Guardians directly. Host families are advised to ensure that smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are installed and regularly tested.
- **Evacuation Procedures:** Not applicable to central operations. Host families should have a clear evacuation plan and communicate it to all residents and guests.
- **Fire Fighting Equipment:** Not applicable to Berkeley Guardians directly. Host families are encouraged to maintain accessible fire extinguishers and understand their use.
- **Fire Drills:** Not applicable to central operations. Host families may conduct informal drills or discussions to ensure preparedness.

Good Housekeeping

Maintaining a clean and orderly environment is essential for health and safety. Berkeley Guardians promotes the following standards:

- Floors, walls, ceilings, windows, and lighting fixtures are kept clean and in good condition.
- Eating areas are maintained to high standards of hygiene.
- Antibacterial wipes are provided for workstations and shared surfaces.
- Host families are advised to store chemicals and medicines in lockable cupboards, preferably at elevated levels to prevent access by children and young people.

Safe Access

To ensure safe movement throughout homestay environments:

- Passageways must be of sufficient width and kept clear of obstructions.
- Adequate space between furniture allows for safe navigation.
- Floors are maintained free of slippery substances, loose objects, and other hazards.

Waste Disposal

Proper waste management is essential for hygiene and safety:

- Suitable containers are provided for waste, scrap, and spillages.
- Safe access to disposal units is maintained at all times.
- Waste containers are emptied regularly and handled in a safe and sanitary manner.

Storage

Safe storage practices are essential to prevent injury and maintain order:

- Materials, articles, and equipment are stored in designated areas with sufficient space.
- Storage units are constructed to ensure stability and prevent collapse.
- Items are stored within safe height limits to avoid falling hazards.
- Access to storage areas is safe and unobstructed, with appropriate containers provided.

Lighting

Berkeley Guardians ensures that lighting across all relevant environments is safe, sufficient, and conducive to wellbeing.

- Lighting is maintained at satisfactory levels in all areas, with no impairment to the distribution of natural or artificial light.
- Defective or missing bulbs are replaced promptly to prevent hazards or reduced visibility.
- Particular attention is paid to passageways to ensure they are well-lit and free from obstructive shadows that could compromise safety.

Health and Welfare

Berkeley Guardians is committed to maintaining high standards of hygiene, comfort, and care for all individuals involved in its services.

- A qualified individual is designated to oversee First Aid, and a fully stocked First Aid Box is readily accessible.
- Toilets and washing facilities are kept clean, hygienic, and in good working order.
- Adequate facilities are provided for clothing storage, and clean drinking water is easily accessible.
- All cloths, utensils, and shared items are regularly cleaned and sterilised to prevent the spread of illness.

General Safety and Maintenance

To ensure a safe and compliant environment, Berkeley Guardians adheres to the following general safety measures:

- All required statutory notices are clearly displayed in appropriate locations.
- Electrical sockets, outlets, and switches are properly maintained and serviced. Socket covers are used where appropriate to prevent accidental contact.
- Premises are adequately heated and ventilated to ensure comfort and air quality.

- Detergents, cleaning fluids, and disinfectants are stored securely in designated cupboards to prevent unauthorised access or misuse.

Electricity Safety

Electrical safety is a priority in all environments associated with Berkeley Guardians. Staff are instructed to follow these guidelines when using appliances:

- Inspect appliances before use to ensure they are in safe working condition.
- Operate appliances only using the designated controls.
- Keep appliances and hands dry during use to prevent electrical hazards.
- Switch off appliances immediately if a fault is detected.
- Report any faults or concerns without delay to the appropriate supervisor or designated safety officer.

Berkeley Guardians also draws attention to the common issue of socket and plug overload in homes and offices. Staff and host families are reminded to respect the rated capacity of electrical outlets and avoid using multiple high-powered devices from a single source.

Hygiene

Berkeley Guardians places strong emphasis on the importance of personal hygiene for all staff, homestay providers, and pupils. Maintaining high standards of cleanliness is essential to safeguarding health and preventing illness.

Food Hygiene

Berkeley Guardians is particularly vigilant about the risks of gastroenteritis and foodborne illnesses. Host families are advised to follow safe food handling practices, including:

- Providing adequate facilities for handwashing, with appropriate disinfectants and clear guidance on proper technique
- Ensuring utensils, food preparation areas, and laundry facilities are kept clean and sanitised
- Preparing raw and cooked foods separately, ideally using different chopping boards and preparation times
- Washing fresh fruit and vegetables thoroughly before consumption
- Storing utensils in clean, designated areas to prevent contamination
- Monitoring and adhering to 'Use-By' and 'Best Before' dates on all food items

Support is available to host families to help them maintain hygienic conditions and reduce the risk of bacterial spread. Hygiene training courses focused on kitchen safety are offered to homestays who wish to participate.

Waste Disposal

Berkeley Guardians ensures that waste is managed in accordance with environmental safety standards, including the principles outlined in the June 1990 Waste Disposal Directive.

Key practices include:

- Proper disposal of all waste, ensuring it is kept out of reach of children
- Use of lidded dustbins at all times to contain waste securely
- Weekly disinfection of all bins to maintain hygiene
- Use of disposable latex gloves when cleaning bodily fluids, followed by thorough disinfection of affected areas

Employees are trained in safe waste disposal procedures and are expected to follow them consistently to maintain a clean and safe environment.

Insurance

Berkeley Guardians maintains comprehensive insurance coverage to meet statutory requirements and protect all stakeholders.

This includes:

- Coverage for property owned or managed by Berkeley Guardians
- Protection for Directors in the event of a valid claim
- Liability coverage for incidents involving children, staff, and volunteers under the organisation's care

This insurance ensures that Berkeley Guardians can respond appropriately and responsibly in the event of an incident, safeguarding the wellbeing of all involved.

Contractors

Berkeley Guardians recognises that host families may occasionally engage contractors to carry out work within their homes, such as decorating, renovations, or repairs. To safeguard the wellbeing of pupils residing in homestays, the following procedures must be followed.

Pre-Approval Requirements

Before any contractor begins work in a homestay where a pupil may be present, Berkeley Guardians must be satisfied that:

- The contractor has demonstrable knowledge of relevant safety standards within their field and a proven record of implementing them effectively
- The contractor's safety statement is comprehensive, current, and accurately reflects their operational practices
- The contractor holds adequate insurance coverage for the scope of work being undertaken
- A formal **Risk Assessment** is conducted by the designated Health and Safety Officer to evaluate any potential impact on pupils residing in the home

Host families are strongly encouraged to schedule contractor work during periods when pupils are not present in the home.

Conditions for Low-Risk Approval

If the Risk Assessment concludes that the proposed work poses a low risk to pupils, the following conditions must be discussed with the host family and agreed upon in advance:

- The contractor must comply with the host family's house safety rules. A copy of these rules must be submitted to Berkeley Guardians if pupils are present during the work
- Consideration must be given to the location and activities of pupils during the work, with particular attention to any specific hazards or risks
- Any hazards introduced into the home by the contractor must be disclosed, controlled, and minimised by the contractor
- Upon completion of the work, an inspection should be carried out by Berkeley Guardians in the presence of the host family, if a pupil is residing in the property
- Berkeley Guardians reserves the right to visit the home during or after the work if deemed necessary

Children with Disabilities or Special Needs

Berkeley Guardians is committed to inclusive care and support for all children, including those with physical disabilities or special needs. To ensure safety and individual attention, a one-to-one staff-to-child ratio is maintained for children requiring additional support.

Children and adults who are HIV positive are fully included in our programmes, as they pose no risk to others under our strict hygiene protocols. Additional precautions are taken to protect them from cross-infection. Enhanced safety measures are applied to all individuals with special needs to ensure their wellbeing in every setting.

Policy Summary

The Berkeley Guardians Health and Safety Policy for 2025 reflects our unwavering commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all children, staff, host families, and visitors. Through clear procedures, regular training, and proactive risk management, we aim to uphold the highest standards of care and responsibility. Our approach is rooted in collaboration, transparency, and continuous improvement. Whether addressing physical safety, mental wellbeing, hygiene, or emergency preparedness, this policy ensures that every individual under our care is protected, respected, and empowered. Berkeley Guardians remains dedicated to reviewing and refining these standards as our organisation evolves.