



THE BIG WOOD ESTATE

School Visits Risk Assessment

Restoring Nature · Inspiring Futures

ADOPTED
May 2025

LAST REVIEWED
May 2026

NEXT REVIEW
May 2027

This risk assessment should be used as guidance alongside each school's own risk assessment and health and safety policies. Its contents apply to any activity that includes these elements. The risk level shown for each hazard is the residual risk once all controls are in place, so it is essential that all control measures are followed to manage risk effectively.

How risk is scored

Risk level = likelihood × severity.

LIKELIHOOD

5	Happens every year
4	Has happened here, but not in the last 12 months
3	Has happened here, but not in the last two years
2	Not happened here, but heard of it elsewhere
1	Not happened here or elsewhere, as far as we know

SEVERITY

	Injury to person or animal	Property damage
5	Death or permanent disability	Destruction of structure or property
4	Hospitalisation	Significant damage, reportable to HSE
3	Treatment by GP or vet	Maintenance needed for continued use
2	First aid or treatment by site staff	Repairs completed without disruption
1	Discomfort	Slight scratches

RISK MATRIX

Likelihood	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		Severity				

High (8-25)

Risk must be controlled by a change of procedure or additional provisions, then reassessed to make sure it falls below 8.

Medium (5-7)

Take action to reduce the risk where the benefits are proportionate to the costs, reassess before spending money, and make sure actions are made permanent.

Low (1-4)

Monitor throughout the visit.

GLs = Group Leaders from the visiting school. Session Leader = the member of The Big Wood Estate team leading the visit.

Hazards and controls

HAZARD AND WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	CONTROLS IN PLACE	LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY	RISK WITH CONTROLS
General Team members and visiting school	- School visits are planned in advance, with the school working closely with The Big Wood Estate to arrange the visit. - Relevant information is shared with the visiting school before arrival, including guidance on appropriate clothing and footwear. - The Estate is unable to accommodate coaches. Schools travel by minibus or car, and this is confirmed at booking. - The Estate is not currently wheelchair accessible. Schools should discuss any access or mobility needs with us before booking. - The Big Wood Estate team meets the visiting school in the car park. The school must remain with its vehicles until staff arrive. - The visiting school identifies the person in charge and the Group Leaders (GLs) for each class or group, so there is a clear route for communication. Numbers are confirmed on arrival. - The Session Leader gives the visiting school a Welcome Safety Talk on arrival. - The visiting school is responsible for managing child-specific needs and should tell us about any specific requirements before arrival. - Lunches are stored in the classroom during the visit so they are not carried around. - Mobile phones are not to be used by children during the visit.	1	3	Low (3)
Moving vehicles in the car park Team members and visiting school. Injury from being hit by a car or minibus.	- The drive onto the Estate has a strict 5mph speed limit. - The person in charge ensures drivers follow instructions from Big Wood Estate staff on arrival. - GLs supervise children getting on and off vehicles. - GLs ensure children stay together in their groups until safely on site. - Drivers tell staff whether they are staying or leaving. Drivers leaving must wait for staff to confirm the exit route is clear of pedestrians.	1	3	Low (3)
Slips and trips around the Estate Visiting school. Injury from tripping on uneven surfaces.	- Children are told not to run on site during the Welcome Safety Talk. GLs and adult helpers enforce this throughout the visit. - All pathways are kept clear. - Weekly checks are made for new trip hazards, which are isolated or fixed immediately. - GLs ensure sensible, appropriate footwear is worn.	2	1	Low (2)

HAZARD AND WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	CONTROLS IN PLACE	LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY	RISK WITH CONTROLS
Spillages in toilets and barn Visiting school. Injury from slipping on wet surfaces.	- GLs and adult helpers report any spillages to staff. - All areas are monitored regularly in line with normal operating practice.	1	2	Low (2)
Moving vehicles on the Estate Team members and visiting school. Injury from collision with vehicles.	- The Welcome Safety Talk asks everyone to listen and watch for moving vehicles. - Vehicle movement is kept to a minimum, especially during visits. - Keys are removed from working farm vehicles when not in use. - GLs ensure children stay together in their groups and do not climb into any farm vehicles. - Hi-vis tabards for children are recommended but not essential.	1	3	Low (3)
Electrical equipment Visiting school. Injury from electric shock or burns.	- All electrical items are PAT tested by a competent person, and fixed electrical systems are installed by a qualified electrician. - Extension leads are only used when necessary, kept in excellent condition, tidy and covered, and are suitable for outdoor use where needed. - Faulty leads are replaced immediately or the item is switched off. - GLs ensure children do not touch or interfere with electrical equipment.	1	2	Low (2)
Loose or escaped animals Team members and visiting school. Injury from crushing or bites, and from slips, trips and falls.	- All animal enclosures are locked or securely fastened. - If an animal escapes, do not approach it. Move away slowly and alert a member of staff.	1	2	Low (2)
First aid Visiting school. Harm from inappropriate advice or treatment.	- GLs know the medical needs of their children and tell us before arrival where necessary. - GLs bring any child-specific medication or medical equipment needed. - GLs tell Big Wood Estate staff about any first aid incident. All incidents are recorded and logged. - Only staff with up-to-date first aid training attend incidents. First aid supplies are available on site. - In a medical emergency, emergency procedures are followed and emergency services called.	1	3	Low (3)
Fencing Visiting school. Livestock escape, splinters, illness from contaminated surfaces.	Fencing is checked and maintained regularly.	1	1	Low (1)

HAZARD AND WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	CONTROLS IN PLACE	LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY	RISK WITH CONTROLS
Plants, trees and weeds Visiting school. Falling branches or trees, allergic reactions, nettle stings, poisonous plants, skin irritation, eating berries.	- A tree safety plan is in place to manage dead or diseased trees. - Vegetation is managed to remove poisonous plants and control nettles and brambles, with irritant plants removed where required. - GLs supervise children at all times so they do not pick plants or berries or stray into staff-only areas.	1	3	Low (3)
Falling objects Visiting school. Injury from crushing or being struck.	- The site is inspected regularly to identify hazards. - Heavy objects are secured where necessary, and staff-only areas are kept as secure as possible. - GLs supervise children at all times.	1	3	Low (3)
Bees, wasps and insects Team members and visiting school. Injury from stings.	- These are natural inhabitants of the countryside and pose little risk unless provoked. - Any signs of nests are dealt with appropriately. - If a child is stung, first aid is given. - Schools tell us about any sting allergies before arrival and bring appropriate medication, such as an EpiPen.	2	1	Low (2)
Allergies Visiting school. Allergic reaction from touching animals, animal feed, straw or nuts.	- Schools tell us before arrival about any allergies, especially those related to animals, animal feed, straw or nuts. - For a child with a severe allergy, the school discusses the measures needed with us before the visit. In rare cases it may be agreed that the child should not attend. - GLs carry child-specific remedies and know how to use them. - GLs remove children with allergies from any environment that puts them at risk, and know what to do if someone has an allergic reaction.	1	3	Low (3)
Weather Team members and visiting school. Sunburn, or hypothermia from wet or cold conditions.	- The Session Leader is aware of the risks of extreme weather and highlights any concerns to GLs. - Schools come prepared with suitable clothing, footwear and sun protection, and GLs ensure sun cream and hats are used on hot days. - First aid is available, and water bottles can be refilled when needed.	1	1	Low (1)

HAZARD AND WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	CONTROLS IN PLACE	LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY	RISK WITH CONTROLS
Child protection Children, vulnerable adults and staff.	- All Big Wood Estate staff and volunteers who lead or regularly help with visits hold an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information, in line with the regulated activity rules in force from 1 September 2026. A record of checks is kept and reviewed. - Schools follow their own child protection and safeguarding policies, and children are always accompanied by a member of school staff. - Big Wood Estate staff never put themselves in a one-to-one situation with a child. - Safeguarding is shared between the Estate and the school. The Estate is responsible for making sure the site, team and activities are managed safely, while school staff remain responsible for supervising and safeguarding the children in their care. - Any safeguarding concerns are reported to the lead teacher and/or the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. - Concerns about an adult's behaviour are reported to the Surrey Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 0300 123 1650 (option 3) or LADO@surreycc.gov.uk.	1	1	Low (1)
Dynamic risk assessment Children, school staff and team members. Unplanned incidents on the Estate, incidents with livestock or extreme weather that need a change to the plan.	- Occasionally we may need to respond to an unplanned incident on the Estate or to adverse weather. This may mean changing the planned route of the walk or the planned activities. - Any change to the route or activities is risk assessed at the time, in consultation with school staff, and agreed with the school staff present before going ahead. - The safeguarding of children and staff remains the priority in any decision to change the plan. - Children are always supervised by appropriate adults (school staff) throughout the visit.	1	3	Low (3)
Lost children Children. Injury while lost through lack of supervision.	- Schools are responsible for keeping the correct adult-to-child ratios for the age of the children. - GLs keep a list of groupings and carry out regular roll calls, and our team encourages headcounts throughout the visit. - GLs count children onto vehicles, and a different adult counts again once seated, before leaving.	1	2	Low (2)

HAZARD AND WHO MIGHT BE HARMED	CONTROLS IN PLACE	LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY	RISK WITH CONTROLS
Animals and hygiene Visiting school. Illness from transferable diseases such as E. coli and other zoonoses, through hand-to-mouth contact.	- Trained staff advise children on handwashing, keeping fingers away from mouths and faces, and not eating in animal areas. - Any animal showing signs of illness is moved into isolation quickly. - Handwashing stations with liquid antibacterial soap are provided and checked to be clean and stocked. - GLs ensure children wash their hands with soap and water after handling animals and before eating or drinking. Wet wipes and hand gels are not sufficient protection. - Food and drink are only consumed in designated eating areas away from animals, which are cleaned before and after each visit. - Adults are asked not to smoke or vape on site.	1	3	Low (3)
Toilets and handwashing Children and teachers. Contact with harmful bacteria.	- Toilets and handwashing areas are checked regularly and kept in good condition. - GLs ensure children wash their hands with liquid antibacterial soap after touching animals and before eating or drinking.	1	2	Low (2)
Planting Children and teachers. Bites, stings, and injuries from garden tools.	- The Session Leader explains and demonstrates each activity and how to use tools safely. - Tools are suitable for the task and well maintained. Seeds and bulbs come from reputable suppliers, and packaging instructions are followed. - Any cuts or grazes are covered with a waterproof plaster before the activity. Staff can provide one if needed. - GLs ensure children follow staff instructions and wash their hands with soap after the session.	1	1	Low (1)

For questions about this risk assessment, please contact info@bigwoodestate.co.uk