

NON-SITE SPECIFIC* RISK ASSESSMENT

(for charity staff and volunteers working on school allotments)

***In line with the charity's annual Membership Agreement:** 'The Papillon Project has its own non-site-specific risk assessment, but we look to each school to complete its own risk assessment to help prevent accidents from occurring.'

Any accidents (including retrospective ones) and near misses, can be officially logged online via the charity's '**Reporting an accident, a retrospective accident or a near miss form**' ([CLICK HERE](#)). Project Lead to collect responses and take further action to prevent future.

Location: All school allotments where charity staff and charity volunteers work	Assessment Date: 01/08/ 2026 Assessor: Matt Willer, Project Lead, in consultation with Leadership Team.
Activity: Creating, developing and maintaining a school allotment and running sessions with young people	Review: Annually or in the event of a significant incident or material change

RISK MATRIX

Risk matrix		Very improbable	Sight possibility	Distinct possibility	Reasonable probability	Near certainty
		1	2	3	4	5
Slight injury	1	A	A	A	A	B
Minor injury	2	A	A	A	B	C
Major injury	3	A	A	B	C	C
Single fatality	4	A	B	C	C	C
Multiple fatality	5	B	B	C	C	C

Impact:

- A score of 1 relates to the chance of a slight injury (e.g. sprained ankle)
- A score of 5 relates to the chance of multiple fatalities.

For likelihood:

- A score of 1 relates to very improbable chance of an incident happening.
- A score of 5 relates to the near certainty that an incident will occur.
- Any risk that results in C will mean that the work must be cancelled until any and all safety risks relating have been mitigated.
- Any risk that results in a B will mean that the work can go ahead but risks will need to be looked at to see if more safety measures need to be put in place.
- Any risk that results in A will be minor (if applicable at all) and the work will be able to go ahead

DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENTS (DSA)

Dynamic risk assessment is a continuous process that allows individuals to identify, analyze, and respond to risks and hazards in real-time, particularly in changing environments. For the purposes of this non-site specific risk assessment, a DSA may be added, where relevant, to help control hazards and thus aid the prevention of accidents. Young people will be encouraged, as part of their educational experience, to join charity staff and volunteers in making a DSA. In reality, a DSA, in the context of school allotments, means to conduct a site survey to help lower risks.

Hazard	Consequence(s)	Who is at Risk	Risk level based on the risk matrix	Controls in Place/Action Required
1.Tools and equipment	Injury, trips and falls, minor cuts and bruises	staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	A Slight possibility, minor injury	<p>Non-power gardening tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSA: site walkabout by adults and young people to make sure no tools have already been left on site followed by a second walkabout to ensure that all tools have been put away. • Tool safety ‘rules for tools’ talk given by charity staff and volunteers to ensure that tools (e.g. forks, spades, rakes hoes) are used correctly and stowed safely when not in use to prevent trip hazards and more seriously injuries caused by falling on tools when stowed incorrectly. Young people to only use tools when instructed to do so and closely supervised at all times. • Tools correctly maintained to help keep them suitable for use. Tools that are broken or damaged, and deemed unsuitable for gardening, need to be clearly labelled or removed by charity staff for repair via charity’s tool bank. • Young people to only use the ‘right tool for jobs’ and age suitable (e.g. heavier tools for older and stronger students) when instructed to do so and closely supervised at all times. Adequate working space for young people when to prevent accidental injuries as a consequence of working in close proximity. <p>Saws and scythes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saws: Clear safety demonstrates given by charity staff and volunteers to young people before use. Gloves and wood offcut to be used to prevent ‘saw slip’ causing injury. • Scythes: Clear safety demonstrates given by charity staff and volunteers to young people before use. Adequate working space for young people when to prevent accidental injuries as a consequence of working in close proximity. <p>Power tools (exclusively power drills, strimmers, lawnmowers and handsaws)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New charity staff to be given briefing when using new electronic gardening equipment for the first time. • Young people to be showed clearly by charity how to use power tools followed by close supervision by charity staff and/or volunteers.

2. Lifting objects	Injury, strains and sprains	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	A Slight possibility, minor injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charity staff and/or volunteer demonstrate correct lifting techniques (back straight, knees bent) and asks if anyone has any prior back or muscular problems. Pupils and adults are not to overfill wheelbarrows where in use to prevent heavy wheelbarrows losing balance and toppling onto people. Additional assistance to be required if an object is too heavy for one person and a clear decision 'not to lift' if object is too heavy or unsafe to lift. Charity staff and volunteers to use a trolley or a sack barrow to transport materials if necessary and if available to aid lifting and transport. Gloves to be strongly encouraged to be worn during a lift.
3. Soil, compost and unintended and unwanted animal faeces	Tetanus E-Coli Weil's Disease Toxoplasmosis Toxocariasis Bioaerosols Skin Irritation Soil blowing into eyes	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	B Slight possibility, potentially serious illness	<p>Soil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloves strongly encouraged to be worn when working with the soil. Instruct pupils how to use tools correctly to avoid soil being flicked into each other's eyes. Hand sanitizer to be unitized by charity staff and volunteers to clean hands followed by a strongly encouraged hand wash, with soap and water, after session (especially before lunchtime). <p>Compost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloves strongly encouraged to be worn when working with the soil. Compost should be stored in a cool place i.e. not in a greenhouse and the container (Bag or dustbin) should be sealed when not in use. Avoid adding too much fruit waste as this attracts flies and does not make effective compost. If vermin are a problem consider buying a tumbler type compost bin which is sealed. Strongly encouraged that young people wear gloves when handling school-made compost wear gloves. Reduce risk of air borne particles by wetting loose mulch before applying. Avoid using loose compost and digging/ raking soil in dry and windy conditions to prevent soil blowing into eyes. Hand sanitizer to be unitized by charity staff and volunteers to clean hands followed by a strongly encouraged hand wash, with soap and water, after session (especially before lunchtime). <p>Unwanted animal faeces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charity staff, volunteer or school staff to check garden before pupils attend session and remove any animal mess whilst wearing gloves. Bury/dispose of mess away from the garden and wash trowel and hands afterwards.

5. Plants and produce	Ingestion, allergic reactions	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	<p>B</p> <p>Slight possibility, potentially serious illness</p>	<p>Poisonous plants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSA: site walkabout by charity staff and volunteers, along with young people, to survey site to spot any poisonous plants that have grown up and present themselves since last visit. School staff encouraged to do the same. • Safety briefing given by charity staff and volunteers to participants before beginning of session to draw awareness that some plants are harmful and/or poisonous • School to complete a full audit of school allotment, as part of their site-specific risk assessment, to identify toxic plants and inform anyone who is using the garden. Schools strongly recommended to reading The Papillon Project's Potentially Harmful Plant Guide for Schools (click here) along with additional information found on the resources/starting school gardening section of the Campaign for School Gardening website. • Clear signage to be created to make clear to young people which plants are poisonous plants. This helps young people to identify plants themselves, helping to make school allotments safer and aiding life long learning about plants too. • Like with stings and bites, charity staff and volunteers to be made aware by the school if any staff or young people have any known plant and food allergies or hay fever. • Gloves to be worn by young people when working with or near to poisonous plants to help prevent any contact with skin. <p>Consuming produce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people to be instructed by charity staff and volunteers, along with school staff, that they should never consume any plant without seeking confirmation from an adult. Clear instructions and guidance given to young people by charity staff and volunteers when harvesting specific plants that can be consumed. Visual demonstrations, along with good signage, to help prevent any plants being misidentified and harvest by mistake. • Growing poisonous plants (e.g. fox gloves) in growing beds containing edible plants should be avoided or, if unavoidable, clear signage provided. • Fruit juices (e.g. pressing apple juice), when the opportunities arise, will be done using clean and sterile equipment and vessels. Young people to be made aware before any consuming that fruit juice that is created is unpasteurized and hence has a short shelf life.
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5. Animal manures (e.g. Farmyard manure from stables and farms)	Infection from various micro-organisms such as: Tetanus E-Coli Bioaerosols Weil's Disease	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	B Slight possibility, potentially serious illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If pupils are spreading the manure over the soil, they should be closely supervised with the wearing of gloves being strongly recommended. • Young people need to be asked about any cuts and grazers that they may prior to spreading compost so charity staff and volunteers can encourage that any cuts and grazers are covered with plasters. • Hand sanitizer to be unitized by charity staff and volunteers to clean hands followed by a strongly encouraged hand wash, with soap and water, after session (especially before lunchtime). Pupils avoid eating and drinking until hands are washed
6. Bees, wasps and other insects	Stings and bites	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	B Slight possibility, potentially serious illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of any wasp or bee nests and avoid these areas. • Be aware of any pupils who are highly allergic to stings. This information must be shared by school staff with charity staff and volunteers. • Young people encouraged to check for ticks after working outside, especially after working in long grass and with legs that show bare skin.

7. Chemicals/paint used in the allotment	Inhalation, skin or eye contact.	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils, school visitors	A Slight possibility, minor injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSHH assessment, along with appropriate PPE, detailing substances that are used by charity staff and volunteers on page • The Papillon Project adopts an environmentally sensitive approach to the garden (e.g. The Papillon Project refuses to use any weed killers or pesticides on environmental grounds). The charity's COSHH assessment also communicates • • Great care should be taken not to spill paint to prevent harm to the environment. 																									
8. Adverse weather conditions	Falling branches due to strong winds; sun exposure; extremely high and low temperatures potentially resulting in: sunburn, dehydration or hypothermia	Pupils	B Slight possibility, potentially major injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gardening directly under trees avoided and/or trees assessed for safety by competent person. Weather conditions to also be considered. • Appropriate clothing to be worn for the weather conditions. Adequate fluids drunk when hot weather conditions arise. • MET Office warning guide, yellow, amber and red to guide charity workers, and therefore volunteers, if a session with young people can go ahead and also if it safe to work just as adults at a school allotment. <div data-bbox="1386 908 1879 1382" data-label="Figure"> <p>Warning impact matrix</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Very likely</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unlikely</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Very low impact</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>High impact</td> </tr> </table> </div> <p>Weather warnings guide - Met Office</p>	Very likely							✓								Unlikely						Very low impact			High impact
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9. Fallen leaves	Risk of piercing wounds due to litter within leaves	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	A Slight possibility, minor injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSA: site walkabout by charity staff and volunteers, along with young people, to survey site to spot any potential hazardous objects that might be covered by leaves. School staff encouraged to do the same. If leaves are to be collected for making leaf mould check the area in advance to make sure there are no hazardous objects such as syringes/ broken glass/ sharp items buried amongst leaves. Wear gloves when collecting leaves or use leaf grabbers Use leaf rakes to collect leaves in a pile and then pick up.
10. Plant supports	Damage to the eye	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	A Slight possibility, minor injury	<p>Plant supports to be avoided where possible.</p> <p>When canes or twigs are used, place cane toppers on the top and try to make them as tall as possible so they are above eye height.</p> <p>Point out the potential risk when people are leaning over beds.</p>
11. Water Butts & Hoses	Slips, trips, falls Water borne bacteria Legionella and other infections	Staff, volunteer helpers, pupils	B Slight possibility, potentially serious illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water butts have child proof, locked lids and secured on a stable surface. When using water from the butts for watering then pupils and adults must wash their hands afterwards. Pupils shown how to correctly water plants to avoid soaking pathways. No running. Water butts to be kept in cool position as far as practically possible. If not, consideration to be given to insulation or light reflecting paint. Empty water out of full hoses after use. (NB Full hoses left in sun or warm conditions may breed micro-organisms such as Legionella) Hoses should not be stored in warm place e.g., greenhouse Hose pipes should be coiled/ rolled up after use and not left lying out
12. School traffic	Injury from moving vehicles	All pupils and staff	A Very improbable, potentially major injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups to keep to designated paths and to be road safe when moving between class and garden (if applicable) Charity staff and volunteer vehicles that required field access to get to school allotment must make their intentions know to school reception and transition at a slow speed with hazard lights flashing so vehicle is easier to see.
13. Large structures	Falling whilst climbing	All pupils	A Very improbable, potentially major injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate supervision and instructed not to climb objects in the garden.




14. Uneven/ Wet surfaces	Slipping, tripping and falling	All staff and pupils	B Distinct possibility, potential minor injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils adequately supervised and instructed to walk whilst in the garden Any new uneven surfaces to be reported to link teachers or school site staff to be made safe.
15. Litter	Cuts and infections (tetanus)	Adults and pupils	A Very improbable, slight injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove all litter from the garden prior to pupils arriving if little is to be found in activity area(s). As above to prevent risk of tetanus from rusty objects.
16. Working at heights	Slips and falls leading to both minor and major injury	Charity staff and volunteers	B Slight possibility, potentially major injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring weather, wearing appropriate footwear, secure ladder in place with an assistant (person) to hold and support bottom of the ladder steady.
17. Battery explosion or fire	Battery explosion or fire causes burns	Everyone	B Slight possibility, potentially major injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Batteries for power tools must never be left in direct sunlight and must always been storied in cool shady area. Batteries must never be left in a car on a hot day and must be allowed to cool before use. Batteries to be transported in metal containers during transit and must be disconnected from their electrical appliance
18. Dead animals	Diseases such as rabies, anthrax, tularemia, lyme disease, leptospirosis.	Adults and pupils	B Slight possibility, potentially major infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dead animals (domesticated or wild) to be removed from school allotment with assistance of school site team. School to be notified in every circumstance.




19. Dust, flying particles and foreign objects	Eye injury, irritation, puncher wounds and impalement.	Adults and pupils	A Slight possibility, potential injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When appropriate PPE (goggles) equipment should be issued when soil, mulch (e.g. straw) or compost is being moved. Deconstruction of pallets to be supervised with appropriate PPE being, along with suitable footwear, worn by adults and young people. Clear deconstruction area made clear to those working along with clear storage area of disassembled pallet wood to prevent accident puncher wounds or impalement happening from nails.
20. Safeguarding (a)	Risk to children or staff and volunteers	Adults and pupils	A Very improbable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff and volunteers will have a DBS check All adult volunteers to have been provided with a copy of KCSIE and a copy of the school safeguarding leaflet and procedure. Safeguarding Concern Forms to be kept on site with First aid kit station
21. Safeguarding (b)	Lone or 1-1 working	Adults and pupils	A Slight possibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All adults who will be down the allotment alone need to check in and out via radio. Young people (under 18) not to work down the allotment without adult supervision 1-1 work down the Allotment of adults and pupils should be avoided <p>If the need arises adults who work 1-1 with a student down the allotment need to inform the office/DSL prior to undertaking the work.</p>
22. Safeguarding (c)	After hours, weekends and low light	Adults and pupils	A Very improbable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the hours after the office is shut (4.30pm) no 1-1 work should be undertaken Winter months (October to March) where light may be poor after school hours pupils and adults should not work separately to the main group of volunteers. At weekends no 1-1 adult student work should be undertaken without parental consent.
23. Safeguarding (d) Members of the public	Unwelcomed interaction from members of the public	All pupils	A Slight possibility of unwanted social interaction with students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils will always be under supervision or travel down together in small groups before a member of staff arrives. Adults to always keep an eye on routes where members of the public are close by to the school allotment. Pupils are safe within the school grounds as all approved visitors must sign in via school reception and, if not DBS vetted, adults must be accompanied by a member of school or charity staff or a DBS vetted charity volunteer.



COSHH Assessment

COSHH stands for 'Control of Substances Hazardous to Health'. COSHH is a set of regulations put in place to protect workers from ill health when working with specific substances and materials. Below is a list of substances which charity staff and volunteers use:

Emergency information can be obtained by the National Poisons Information Service: +44 844 892 0111 / 112

Substance	Toxicity	Ecotoxicity	Required PPE?	First Aid measures?	Handling and storage
RONSEAL GARDEN PAINT 	<p>The product is not classified as hazardous according to Regulation (EC) 1272/2008 as amended.</p> <p>The product is not classified as dangerous according to Directive 1999/45/EC and its amendments.</p>	<p>Percentage of the mixture consisting of ingredient(s) of unknown hazards to the aquatic environment: 9.7%</p>	 	<p>General Eye contact Inhalation Skin contact Ingestion Protection of first-aiders: In all cases of doubt, or when symptoms persist, seek medical attention. Never give anything by mouth to an unconscious person. If unconscious, place in recovery position and seek medical advice: Check for and remove any contact lenses. Immediately flush eyes with running water for at least 15 minutes, keeping eyelids open. Seek immediate medical attention. Remove to fresh air. Keep person warm and at rest. If not breathing, if breathing is irregular or if respiratory arrest occurs, provide artificial respiration or oxygen by trained personnel. Remove contaminated clothing and shoes. Wash skin thoroughly with soap and water or use recognised skin cleanser. Do NOT use solvents or thinners. If swallowed, seek medical advice immediately and show the container or label. Keep person warm and at rest. Do NOT induce vomiting. If swallowed, rinse mouth with water (only if the person is conscious). Get immediate medical attention. No action shall be taken involving any personal risk or without suitable training.</p>	<p>Due to the organic solvents content of the mixture: Prevent the creation of flammable or explosive concentrations of vapours in air and avoid vapour concentrations higher than the occupational exposure limits. In addition, the product should only be used in areas from which all naked lights and other sources of ignition have been excluded. Electrical equipment should be protected to the appropriate standard. Keep away from heat, sparks and flame. No sparking tools should be used. Avoid contact with skin and eyes. Avoid the inhalation of dust, particulates, spray or mist arising from the application of this mixture. Avoid inhalation of dust from sanding. Eating, drinking and smoking should be prohibited in areas where this material is handled, stored and processed. Put on appropriate personal protective equipment Never use pressure to empty. Container is not a pressure vessel. Always keep in containers made from the same material as the original one. Comply with the health and safety at work laws. Information on fire and explosion protection Vapours are heavier than air and may spread along floors. Vapours may form explosive mixtures with air.</p> <p>Keep away from: oxidising agents, strong alkalis, strong acids. Additional information on storage conditions Observe label precautions. Store in a dry, cool and well-ventilated area. Keep away from heat and direct sunlight. Keep container tightly closed. Keep away from sources of ignition. No smoking. Prevent unauthorised access. Containers that have been opened must be carefully resealed and kept upright to prevent leakage.</p>

Substance	Toxicity	Ecotoxicity	Required PPE?	First Aid measures?	Handling and storage
BIRDS RAW LINSEED OIL 	Raw linseed oil is non-toxic and is safe to use. It is often used as a natural wood finish and is an alternative to boiled linseed oil.	Prevent entry to sewers and public waters. Notify authorities if liquid enters sewers or public waters. Hazardous to the aquatic environment, short term and long term.	 	<p>If substance makes contact with eyes: rinse immediately with plenty of water. Obtain medical attention if pain, blinking or redness persists</p> <p>If substance makes contact with skin and causes irritation: remove affected clothing and wash all exposed skin area with mild soap and water, followed by warm water rinse.</p> <p>If substance is ingested: Rinse mouth. Do NOT induce vomiting. Obtain emergency medical attention.</p>	<p>This product contains drying oil. Materials with drying oil can self-ignite without warning. Let used cloths and rags dry unfolded or wash thoroughly with water and detergent and lay flat to dry.</p> <p>Wash hands and other exposed areas with mild soap and water before eating, drinking or smoking and when leaving work. Provide good ventilation in process area to prevent formation of vapour.</p> <p>Do not eat, drink or smoke when using this product. Always wash hands after handling the product. Take off immediately all contaminated clothing and wash before reuse.</p> <p>Keep in original container. Store in well-ventilated place. Keep container tightly closed. No direct sunlight.</p>

Substance	Toxicity	Ecotoxicity	Required PPE?	First Aid measures?	Handling and storage
CREOSOTE (that pre-existence in wooden materials (e.g. railway sleepers) that The Papillon Project purchases)	Creosote is toxic. It is a known carcinogen that can irritate eyes and skin, and inhaling creosote particles can lead to respiratory issues.	Creosote is ecotoxic. It poses a significant risk to the environment and wildlife if leached into soil and water.	 	<p>If substance makes contact with eyes: rinse immediately with plenty of water. Obtain medical attention if pain, blinking or redness persists</p> <p>If substance makes contact with skin and causes irritation: remove affected clothing and wash all exposed skin area with mild soap and water, followed by warm water rinse.</p> <p>If substance is ingested: call for medical assistance immediately.</p>	<p>Correct PPE to be worn at all times when moving creosoted railway sleepers into position.</p> <p>When railway sleepers are in position for creating growing beds, they should be lined to help prevent leaching into soil. No plants that will be consumed by humans should be growing in creosoted railway beds.</p> <p>Railways should not be dug into the soil to deter any leaching and wooden cladding should be considered on the outside of creosoted railway sleepers to prevent accidental contact with skin and clothing, especially when the weather is hot and encourages creosoted tar to seep from wood.</p>