



Document	General RA
Version	3.0
Updated	09.08.24
Updated by	M. Kennedy
Department	H&S

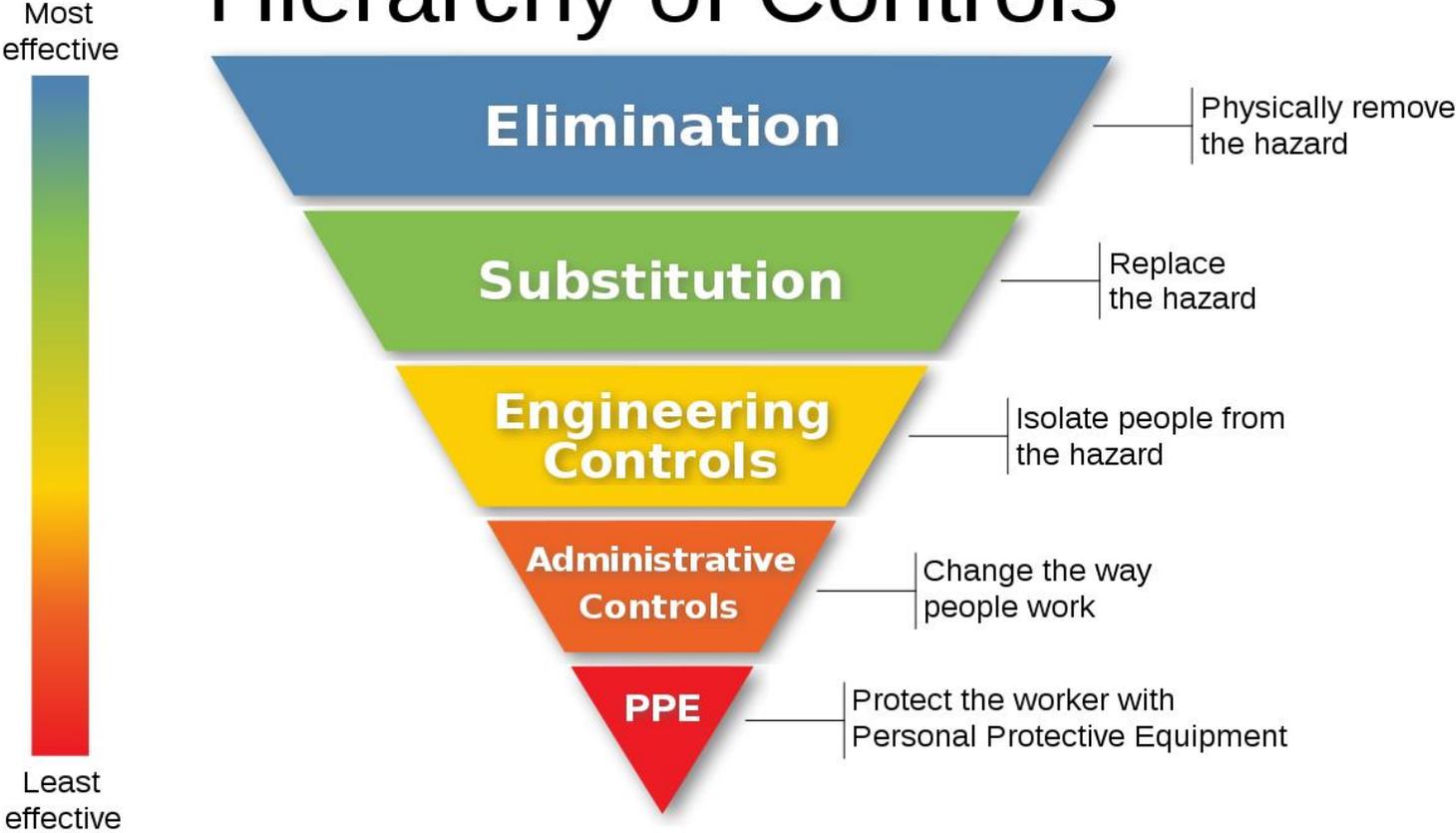
School/Area	ASSaM	Division/Department	Psychology, Sociology and Education		
Assessors Name	Patrick Boxall, Chris Green, Katie Thomas	Date Completed	May 2024	Review Date	May 2025
Activity	<p>This is a general risk assessment for Outdoor Learning Activities taking place across QMU campus environments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maggie's Wee Wood</li> <li>• Wee Forest</li> <li>• Pond Area</li> <li>• Hedgerow and Woodland Margins</li> <li>• Parkland and Pathways</li> <li>• University Square</li> <li>• The Howff and Surrounding Area</li> </ul>				
Who Might be Harmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Visitors</li> </ul>				
Reference documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus Guidelines</li> <li>• QMU Outdoor Learning Handbook</li> </ul>				

Questions about this risk assessment from visitors are welcome and can be directed to:

- Visitors – [campusadmin@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:campusadmin@qmu.ac.uk)
- Staff - [Pboxall@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:Pboxall@qmu.ac.uk) (Patrick Boxall)

Risk Assessment Matrix				Risk Level			
SEVERITY				LIKELIHOOD (L) X SEVERITY (S) = RISK LEVEL			
				TRIVIAL	MINOR	MAJOR	
LIKELIHOOD	VERY LIKELY	Medium	High	High	Low	Acceptable	No further action is usually required, but existing control measures must be maintained and reviewed regularly.
	POSSIBLE	Low	Medium	High	Medium	Tolerable	Medium risks may be tolerated while further control measures to reduce them are being planned and implemented or if no risk reduction is possible. Improvements should be made where practicable.
	UNLIKELY	Low	Low	Medium	High	Unacceptable	Take immediate action and stop the activity if necessary. Maintain existing control measures thoroughly. Frequently monitor the effectiveness of implemented control measures.

# Hierarchy of Controls



HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL MEASURES						
Activity	What are the Potential Hazards	What are you doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who is responsible for the actions?	When are the actions due to be completed?	Risk Level (Likelihood x Severity)
1 Walking around site/campus	Paths; uneven ground	Clearly designated and signed pathways.  Groups led to site.  Areas with particular uneven ground are highlighted by staff on site.				Low
	Water Bodies	Staff on site are First Aid trained.  Staff on site have radios/mobiles to contact Emergency Services, etc.  Children and adults are warned of the risks of water.  Staff on site are Water Safety trained where appropriate				Low
	Vehicles and cyclists on shared paths	H&S talk before heading out to the site so that all children				Low

		<p>and adults are aware of the potential of vehicles/cyclists.</p> <p>Staff on site are First Aid trained.</p> <p>Vehicle access control procedures in place including time restrictions e.g. delivery vehicles only between entrance and building unless guided through site.</p>				
	Animals	<p>On the day, the site checks and clears any guano or feces from the area where activities take place.</p> <p>Hand washing facilities available. All participants reminded to wash their hands after the session.</p> <p>All participants reminded not to put their fingers/hands in their mouths/on their faces.</p> <p>Check skin for ticks, if required.</p>				Low
	Weather	<p>Children advised to wear appropriate clothing for the weather conditions.</p>				Low

		<p>Drink regularly in hot weather and wear sunscreen.</p> <p>Wet Weather Plans in case of severe weather.</p> <p>Gritting of paths when icy, closure of paths when severe weather warnings are issued (e.g. wind).</p> <p>On the day Site Checks.</p>				
	<p>General Public</p>	<p>Staff and volunteers must always supervise children.</p> <p>Outdoor Learning staff have up-to-date PVG</p> <p>Children in small groups.</p> <p>Children undertaking activities in enclosed or specific areas.</p> <p>Note – Newhailes House woodland is open public access so some anti-social behaviour has impacted site. This is monitored daily and external support is requested from Police and other services if needed.</p>				<p>Low</p>

	<p>Plants/Trees/Soil</p>	<p>Plants that are not to be touched to be highlighted (with visuals) to adults and children during H&amp;S talk at beginning of session. Plants also pointed out in habitat.</p> <p>Agree not to eat any plant found. There are bluebells on site- be very aware in Spring.</p> <p>Yew trees present- make aware of berries in Autumn.</p> <p>Trees are monitored and treated appropriately. Areas of concern are roped off to prevent access.</p> <p>Trees and branches monitored and cut and cleared when needed. Area assessed after high winds.</p> <p>Sessions cancelled, and participants informed if high winds and storms forecast.</p> <p>Cuts and broken skin (including eczema) are covered to prevent infection.</p> <p>Adults are aware of risks.</p>				<p><b>Low</b></p>
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		<p>Knowledge of any allergies in the group.</p> <p>Awareness of any areas of site of higher risk – including nettles. Group alerted to areas and recognising a nettle.</p> <p>Minor stings cooled with water.</p> <p>If serious stings or any allergic reaction, medical help is sought immediately.</p>				
	Litter	<p>On the day checks for litter.</p> <p>Litter pick (with litter pickers and gloves) and monitor throughout the day.</p> <p>If sharps are discovered, inform Campus Operations.</p> <p>Staff on site are first aid trained.</p>				Low
	Lost Child/Children	<p>Children to be supervised at all times by staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Leaders at the front and back of walking groups so that everyone stays together.</p>				Low

			<p>Activities taking place in enclosed or specific areas, made clear to children and adults.</p> <p>Radio/mobile communication is in place. School children in Hi-Vis at the discretion of school staff.</p>				
		Safeguarding	<p>Staff leading sessions have up-to-date PVG</p> <p>Volunteers have safeguarding training.</p> <p>Safeguarding policy and procedures in place.</p>				Low
		Car Park	<p>5mph speed limit in place</p> <p>Designated parking bays, adequate lighting and CCTV.</p>				Low
2	In the buildings	Fire	<p>Visitors, organisers, and staff should be made aware of what to do in the event of a fire and the location of Assembly Points.</p> <p>Routine Fire Alarm testing and drills will be carried out in buildings.</p>				Low

		Signage, extinguishers, and other fire safety equipment have been installed in buildings.					
	Lost child/children	Everyone told to go straight to reception if separated from the group. Inform Campus Operations.				Low	
3	During Activity/Sessions	Building dens/shelters and smaller 'dwellings' for imagined forest dwellers	<p>Size and heaviness of wood discussed.</p> <p>Avoid any wood that is heavy or would obviously hurt if dropped on foot</p> <p>Avoid rocks that are lying about.</p> <p>In general, do not put big branches above head height—this must be agreed upon with the leader BEFORE it is planned for a particular shelter.</p> <p>If branches are placed above head height, then the branch and support must be sound and secure. Leader to support as needed.</p>				Low

		<p>Clear H&amp;S talk at beginning of session and beginning of activity.</p> <p>Site Checks on the day.</p> <p>Equipment appropriate to age.</p> <p>High levels of staff supervision.</p> <p>Washing hands at the end of the activity.</p> <p>Children to work at their confidence level.</p> <p>Staff are First Aid trained.</p>				
4	Free play including play with sticks	<p>Clear H&amp;S talk at beginning of session and beginning of activity.</p> <p>Challenge 'aggressive' behaviour or play</p>				Low
5	<p><b>HIGHER RISK ACTIVITIES</b></p> <p>The following activities are Higher Risk, so they are NOT to be</p>	<p><b>Climbing Trees</b></p>	<p><b>Climbing to head height of climber- absolute maximum of 2 metres.</b></p> <p><b>Leaders to monitor this and be aware of any climbing areas.</b></p>			Medium

<p>done without prior approval.</p> <p>These activities can only be organised by qualified and experienced practitioners with prior approval from the campus team.</p> <p>Please contact <a href="mailto:Events@gmu.ac.uk">Events@gmu.ac.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:pboxall@gmu.ac.uk">pboxall@gmu.ac.uk</a> for advice.</p>		<p>Rope off any dangerous tree if required for needs of the group</p> <p>Verbally warn group of any identified hazards, rope off areas where risk is high e.g. fallen tree,</p> <p>Participants to be actively involved in identify hazards and risks. This will need on-going contracting as confidence of the group grows</p>				
	<p>Rope Swing</p>	<p>Check the quality, strength, and condition of the rope. Only suitable ropes that are within the life expectancy of fall tests should be used.</p> <p>Leader to tie all knots for rope swing using round turn and two half hitches, figure of eight knots, or bowline with half hitch.</p> <p>Keep height low- under 2 metres at highest point- generally, height is between 50 and 100cms</p> <p>Allocate a supporter to monitor the swing</p>				<p>Medium</p>



		<p>Check fastening to tree- use tree huggers/webbing/suitable rope. Carabiners used within recommended shelf life for safety- generally 10 years from purchase.</p> <p>Follow manufacturers instructions.</p>				
	Hand Tools	<p>High ratio- initially 1:2 for practice after group demonstration.</p> <p>Designated area clear of obstruction</p> <p>Space around tool equal to arms length plus length of tool AKA: 'blood bubble'</p> <p>All Tool Base lines followed.</p> <p>Sawhorses used</p> <p>Stable platform for knife/axe work.</p> <p>First Aid Kit carried.</p>				Medium
	Woodland Management (cutting of trees/clearing wood)	Only undertake a task within the capacity of the leadership group.				Medium

**This means coppicing small trees only—a maximum diameter of 15 cms. If two hands cannot fit around the trunk, then professional help is needed.**

**Work within the capacity of handtool use only.**

**Hang-ups- if the size of the hang-ups may cause a head injury, then PPE must be worn.**

**Ensure a safe area in front/behind/beneath any fall zone.**

**Follow best practice for any lift.**

**Appropriate PPE- boots, helmet if weight of tree/bough could cause a level 4 injury. Note – most work undertaken in this category would be at level 3.**

**Only do these activities with an appropriate group in terms of size and skill e.g. most likely with leadership training.**

			<p><b>All members of the group who are in the danger areas must wear PPE.</b></p>				
		<p><b>Fire</b></p>	<p><b>Only done if ratios allow and an appropriate group</b></p> <p><b>Campus office informed</b></p> <p><b>Lothian Fire Control Centre informed: 0131 228 2409. Informed at start of fire and when safely extinguished.</b></p> <p><b>Tight control of space.</b></p> <p><b>Sites away from buildings and main paths.</b></p> <p><b>Fire trays used, raised off of ground. At Newhailes fire trays or Kelly kettle will always be used to comply with NTS rules.</b></p> <p><b>Leader monitors closely</b>  <b>Designate safe area marked by rope or other markers; inner fire area clearly marked with branches NOT stones unless fire bricks available</b></p>				<p><b>Medium</b></p>

		<p>Fire blanket, fire gloves and water all available at fire side.</p> <p>Make group aware of flammable oil/plastic based clothing, long hair and scarves.</p> <p>Fire risks discussed as group</p> <p>Staff always allocated to manage fire</p> <p>Careful routines of turn for activities such as cooking</p> <p>Fire always put out to 'hand touch' cool- including ground if fire over set on the earth.</p> <p>Ashes safely disposed of as advised by site manager.</p>					
		<p><b>Cooking</b></p>	<p>The leader either does the cooking or closely manages.</p> <p>Allergies shared in parental consent forms.</p> <p>Chooses food to keep safe, e.g., minimises meat or reheats it.</p> <p>All control actions as for fire plus:</p>				<p><b>Medium</b></p>

			<p><b>Use greenwood for marshmallows</b></p> <p><b>Discuss burns from hot sugar</b></p> <p><b>Work within REHIS guidelines and protocols.</b></p> <p><b>Staff trained in food hygiene and outdoor cooking</b></p>				
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