

# Walbottle Village Primary



## Pond POLICY

We wish to provide all our pupils with safe opportunities for hands-on access to the pond as part of their learning.

This policy document dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 was adopted by the staff of Walbottle Village Primary School from September 2024.

This policy outlines the principles for safe practice in the use of the pond. 'Pond' refers to the water and the surrounding environment.

### **Responsibility**

The employer, Valour Trust, has ultimate responsibility to ensure the health and safety of children and adults. The task of overseeing health and safety for the pond has been delegated to *Caroline Ridley* (for the purposes of this policy this person is called the *Pond Manager*).

In addition, it is the responsibility of teaching and non-teaching staff and other adults to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others when working at the pond
- remain familiar with this policy and associated documents
- implement what this policy says
- carry out pond activity risk assessments when required

The pond manager should record the actions they have taken to maintain the pond and keep it safe.

### **Risk Assessment**

The pond area is located in the science garden. It is fenced/walled off to the rest of the playground and field. The pond is 84cm long, 59cm wide and the depth is 29cm. The edges of the pond are at ground level. There is a lockable gate. The office hold the key to the science garden. The adult leading the group, after the activity has been completed, must lock the gate and take the key back to the office.

The pond will be checked regularly by Mr. Johnny Thackray and half-termly, during Health and Safety checks, by Mrs. Danielle Thackray and Mr, Johnny Thackray to ensure:

- All edges around the pond are clearly visible
- The pond is maintained regularly for example, check the build-up of silt; overhanging branches, removal of fast growing pond weeds in spring.
- There is nothing near the pond that could be a trip hazard.
- The pond safety sign is visible.

Maintenance will be undertaken as required to ensure the pond is healthy and the area is safe.

### **Communication**

Actions that have arisen from the checks must be communicated to staff. No child is allowed in the pond area unsupervised. Children are taught that they

may not enter without an adult, are aware that they should tell the nearest adult immediately, if they see a child in the pond area and never to go into the science garden and pond area alone. When planning a pond-based activity, staff must first talk to the *Pond Manager* about the current condition of the pond.

Teachers must visit the pond prior to the activity and carry out an activity-specific risk assessment, taking the following into consideration:

- pond condition and circumstances on the day, if necessary inform the *Pond Manager* of any control measures that need to be actioned. For example, there are lots of leaves on and in the pond, which need to be cleared
- requirements of the activity
- the needs of individual pupils.

### **Supervision**

Adults other than teachers supporting or leading pond-based activities should be briefed by a teacher prior to carrying out any activity. It is the duty of the class teacher to inform any support staff/volunteer adults about this policy. Adults accompanying the children must be aware of which children they are responsible for. The class teacher must consider the levels of supervision required for an activity and ensure this is on their risk assessment. This will depend on:

- the activity, for example supervision ratios should be higher the closer to the water the children are
- knowledge of the children engaged in the activity for example, age, behaviour, individual needs
- the size and shape of the pond

### **Generic control measures for all pond-based activities**

Before any pond activity, staff are responsible for ensuring that the following generic control measures are in place, in addition to any activity-specific control measures:

- Children must not put anything in or near their mouth during the activity
- Children and adults must wash their hands with soap and water after the activity
- Children and adults must wear appropriate clothing and footwear eg sensible school shoes/trainers
- Any cuts must be covered with a waterproof dressing
- Children must be taught sensible behaviour for working by water and be reminded of the rules for how to stay safe near the pond, before every visit.
- In case of emergency, the **Emergency Action Plan** must be followed.

**All staff must be familiar with the Pond Emergency Action Plan.**

### **Pond Emergency Action Plan**

A **minor incident** is considered to be a child slipping feet first into the water with no obvious danger to life.

In this case, follow the steps below:

- An adult will help the child to get out of the pond, as carefully and as quickly as possible.
- Another member of staff will move other children to safety.
- Accompany the child who fell into the pond back to school building to wash and dry. Inform a first aider to check for any cuts/swallowed water.

**A major incident** is considered to be life-threatening, including suspected drowning.

In the event of a child falling into the pond, resulting in injury or near drowning, follow the steps below:

- If safe to do so, an adult to walk into the water to aid the victim. The pond is 29cm deep at its deepest part.
- Send another adult/sensible older child (KS2) to get a first aider to the area and contact the emergency services.
- Another member of staff will move other children to safety as soon as possible.

#### **Emergency services**

Ring 999 and give details of the incident to the operator.

School telephone number: 01912675320

School address: Walbottle Village Primary School, The Green, Walbottle Village, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE158JL.

**All incidents involving a fall into a pond should be reported to the head teacher and recorded using the school incident record system.**

#### **Reviewing**

This policy is reviewed in line with all other school policies, every two years, unless there is a fundamental change in the pond design or there are changes to school health and safety advice in relation to the pond.

September 2024