



**South London Botanical Institute**  
**Health and Safety Policy (version 22.11.21)**

**1 General Statement**

The South London Botanical Institute (SLBI) will endeavour to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all those involved in, or affected by, its projects and activities, whether as a visitor, a volunteer or a paid staff member.

In order to meet its obligations the SLBI will continuously strive to

- 1.1 Ensure compliance with relevant health and safety legislation and guidance;
- 1.2 Ensure effective management of health and safety risks across all of the SLBI's activities;
- 1.3 Provide and maintain all its tools and equipment in a sound condition;
- 1.4 Provide instruction, training and supervision in health and safety for all volunteers and staff;
- 1.5 Provide so far as reasonably practicable, welfare facilities and arrangements for volunteers and staff whilst working at the SLBI site or at its off-site activities;
- 1.6 Maintain a pro-active approach to Health and Safety management on all projects and activities;
- 1.7 Maintain an accident reporting system and inform the Trustees of any serious accident.

The SLBI recognises that certain duties apply to all those involved in its activities. These duties are to take care of their own safety and that of other staff, volunteers and visitors and to co-operate with the SLBI's policies to enable the Institute to carry out its responsibilities.

The SLBI will always have a nominated Health and Safety trustee representative who advises staff and trustees on implementation of this policy. This trustee will work with the Administrator and others named on the on-site poster to implement the policy on a day-to-day basis and advise of any necessary updates. This will be done through use of a Health & Safety Action Plan, which is monitored at each Trustees' Meeting.

**2 All staff and volunteers have a duty to:**

- 2.1 Identify the hazards involved with activities, evaluate the risks, decide on precautions to control those risks, ensure all those involved are aware of these risks and take the requisite precautions;
- 2.2 Work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues or any other person who has a right of access to the site of the activity;
- 2.3 Adhere to all safety procedures and conform to all instructions given by event leader;
- 2.4 Report all accidents, near misses and hazardous situations and consider the implications with the event leaders and if necessary, the Trustees;

2.5 Review risk assessments at regular intervals and update them if necessary. The key standard risk assessments in place are for school visits, holiday activities and work in the garden (with the most up-to-date ones shared with new volunteers as appropriate, printed and kept with the First Aid boxes in the office). For one-off other unusual events a checklist is made for each one which includes risk assessment.

These risk assessments or checklists should be checked before each school visit, holiday activity or other event and amended with any specific risks or requirements as necessary.

### **3 Particular management of projects working with children and young people**

3.1 The SLBI believes that children and young people derive a good deal of benefit from taking part in a wide range of educational activities. When engaging in activities children and young people need and want to be exposed to risk. We understand that our role is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of staff, volunteers, young people and visitors are upheld at all times.

3.2 Staff and volunteers who are working with young people have the common law duty of care, which is to act as any reasonable prudent parent/carer would do in similar circumstances.

3.3 In particular they will:

- assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group and needs;
- ensure children and young people are given adequate instruction to fully engage with, experience and enjoy a wide range of activities, without compromising safety
- work in accordance with the SLBI's latest Safeguarding Policy.

### **4 First Aid**

4.1 At least one First Aid box will be available on the SLBI site or in close proximity to all of the SLBI's off-site field activities. There are currently 3 boxes available: one in the Education Room and two in the office – one portable for field trips.

4.2 A record of all first aid cases treated will be kept in the Accident Book, which will be kept with the First Aid Boxes in the office.

4.3 A contents sheet will be kept in each First Aid Box and marked when any item is used. A designated person (currently the Education & Outreach Coordinator) will check the boxes regularly and arrange for the Administrator to replace the contents as necessary.

4.4 The SLBI will place on an obvious wall a list of people to find in the event of needing First Aid and will ensure that at least one member of staff has had training within the last 3 years.

4.5 The SLBI will maintain a defibrillator at the building and ensure regular training and awareness.

### **5 Training**

5.1 The SLBI will ensure that new employees and volunteers receive information on health and safety as part of their induction and training where appropriate, and this will be included in the Staff & Volunteer Induction Checklist. Risk assessments will be provided to new staff and volunteers working in the key risk areas.

5.2 Staff will remind new employees and volunteers about their responsibilities regarding their personal health and welfare (see sections 7, 8 and 9 below).

### **6 General responsibilities**

6.1 The SLBI has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for all staff, volunteers and visitors. It is the responsibility of all staff and volunteers to ensure that all areas are kept clean and tidy, both in the office and in public areas.

6.2 Whilst event leaders are nominated as having responsibility for checking for hazards before an event, all staff and volunteers should be responsible for spotting hazards or potential hazards. If a hazard is found, it should be removed or dealt with as soon as possible, or if not, reported to the event leader (or Administrator if it's not during an event).

6.3 Particular attention will be paid to hazards in particular areas as follows, with appropriate warning signage and/or barriers put in place where these hazards need to remain in place, and enough staff/volunteers present to ensure adequate supervision where children are involved (otherwise the event should not include the hazardous element):

6.3.1 In the **garden** the SLBI will ensure that:

- dangerous equipment/tools and toxic substances are kept out of public reach
- damaged tools are taken out of use and repaired asap,
- garden hoses are not trailing when visitors are due in,
- slippery leaves, apples on the ground etc are minimised,
- visitors are made aware of garden pond, poisonous and skin-irritating plants.

6.3.2 In the **kitchen** the SLBI will ensure that:

- hot cooking equipment is kept out of public reach
- toxic cleaning materials and alcohol are kept out of public reach
- toxic cleaning materials and alcohol (and other flammable liquids) are kept away from naked flames such as cookers and boilers
- the fridge is kept safe: food is kept covered, expired food is regularly thrown out, it is cleaned regularly and it has a working thermometer.
- cutlery and crockery are regularly put away after washing up,
- gloves are used when handling public food and money is taken separately.

6.3.3 In the **office** the SLBI will ensure that:

- appropriate seating is available,
- computers screens are adjustable,
- keyboards are separate from screens,
- there is adequate workstation space,
- there is access to toilet and washing facilities.

6.4 When working in premises managed by another organisation (eg. a local community garden or school) staff and volunteers should be made aware of the relevant health and safety procedures of that organisation before proceeding with an activity.

## **7 Personal safety and lone working**

7.1 Staff or volunteers who are working on their own should not allow access to casual visitors who have no appointment. Staff or volunteers should not work on their own when the Institute is open to the public for general visiting.

7.2 Up to date contact details will be obtained by the Administrator for all staff and volunteers who may work on their own eg leading weekend events.

7.3 All staff and volunteers who may work on their own will be provided with the contact details of other people who may be contacted in an emergency.

7.4 Staff or volunteers who carry large amounts of money for the SLBI should be accompanied by another person if not travelling by car.

7.5 Staff and volunteers should not put themselves at risk on account of the SLBI's property.

7.6 All incidents of aggression or violence and any threat to personal safety should be reported to the Administrator and recorded in the Accident Book.

## **8. Fire safety**

8.1 Fire Safety is taken extremely seriously and we will strive to ensure the SLBI and its employees and volunteers comply with the Regulatory reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It is the responsibility of all staff (including freelance gardeners and event leaders) and volunteers to be aware of fire hazards, to know how to call the Fire Brigade, and to know the location of fire exits and the assembly point (currently the Fire Exits are the front, kitchen and garden doors and, only in extreme emergency, the upstairs meeting room across the shed roof. The assembly point is on the front drive).

The Administrator is our Fire Officer, or in their absence, the member of staff, gardener or event leader on site. In the event of an alarm, the Fire Officer of the day should locate all visitors in the garden or house with mobility issues or other requirements (eg sight/hearing difficulties) and assist with their exit. Wheelchair access/exit is currently easiest via the garden.

When any event is taking place, the kitchen door should be unlocked and the side gate should be unlocked, using the padlock code. All staff and other fire representatives should be made aware of the code. All fire exits should be clear of clutter at all times.

8.2 All staff, volunteers and visitors should sign in and out when they are in the SLBI building or garden, so that their presence can be checked in the event of a fire – signing in books (one for SLBI reps, one for visitors) should be taken by the Event leader/Fire officer or anybody else who can reach the books safely. The Event leader or people responsible for each room/garden should also check that their rooms have been evacuated.

8.3. The Administrator will arrange the following:

- Annual fire extinguishers checks and electrical appliances PAT tests in accordance with the current guidelines.
- Monthly fire check of all exits.
- Monthly emergency lighting tests\*
- Weekly fire alarm tests\* and smoke alarm tests\*
- Six monthly refresher fire safety training
- Six monthly evacuation drill with relevant staff and volunteers.
- Fire safety induction training for new staff and volunteers.
- Annual check of all signage re visibility and current building and government regulations.
- Records of all the above, including staff training, to be held for due diligence.

\*to be installed, when equipment and systems agreed, in 2021.

## **9 Lifting and Handling**

9.1 Manual lifting should be avoided where at all possible.

9.2 Staff and volunteers should not put themselves at risk by attempting to lift heavy loads which could be taken apart or divided into smaller quantities. The assistance of other staff or volunteers should always be sought for moving large quantities or for lifting heavy and awkward loads such as tables, freezers, herbarium cabinets and piles of books. When lifting is done by a team, instructions should be given by one person only.

9.3 Any member of staff or volunteer feeling a strain should stop immediately and record the incident in the Accident Book.

9.4 Aids to reduce the risk of injury (e.g. trolleys) must always be used if available.

## **10 Health at work**

10.1 All staff and volunteers who work out of doors are responsible for ensuring they obtain a tetanus injection in the event of receiving a dirty wound.

10.2 All staff and volunteers should make their colleagues or the event leader aware of any allergies or medical conditions which may require urgent treatment in the event of an accident.

10.3 The Administrator should ensure that up-to-date contact details for next of kin are on record for all staff and volunteers.

10.4 All staff and volunteers should work in line with the SLBI's latest Covid-19 Procedures.

## **11 Stress at work**

11.1 The SLBI will do all it can to eradicate problems relating to stress at work.

11.2 The responsibility for reducing stress at work lies both with the SLBI and its staff and volunteers. Staff and volunteers should become aware of the causes of stress, and ensure that they do not work in a way which could cause them to suffer an increase in stress, nor cause an increase in stress on others.

11.3 If a member of staff or a volunteer is suffering from stress at work, they should discuss this with their line manager at the first opportunity. Where practicable and reasonable, the SLBI will seek to provide assistance to the member of staff or volunteer.

## **12 Working from home**

12.1 Working from home has become more frequent since the Covid-19 pandemic. All staff working from home should ensure that they have suitable equipment and an appropriate workstation, in order to carry out their role safely and effectively. Additional resources will be made available by the SLBI for this purpose, as appropriate.

12.2 Working from home can bring risk of mental health issues due to isolation, difficult home environments and other situations. Staff should remain in close contact with their colleagues and notify their line manager of any difficulties.

Signed on behalf of SLBI Trustees:

Name: Michael Clarke

Date: 05.01.22

Date for review: 22.11.22