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Wycombe Arts Centre – Health and Safety policy 2025

General Policy Statement

1. The board of directors of Wycombe Arts Centre (WAC) is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all staff, volunteers, visitors, and participants. This policy outlines the key responsibilities and procedures in place to maintain a safe working and creative environment.
2. WAC will take all reasonably practicable measures to prevent injury, damage to property, and harm to the health of all those involved in the organisation's activities.
3. Key responsibilities include:
    - Providing and maintaining safe working conditions that meet statutory requirements.
    - Offering training and instruction to employees and volunteers to perform their tasks safely and efficiently.
    - Engaging staff and volunteers in continuous improvement of health and safety practices by consulting them regularly.
    - Monitoring and reviewing health and safety practices to ensure they remain effective.
4. All staff, volunteers, clients, and anyone working on site are required to:
    - Work safely and efficiently.
    - Follow agreed-upon procedures for maintaining a safe environment.
    - Participate in the investigation of accidents and help prevent recurrence.
5. All accidents will be recorded in the accident/incident book, and any findings or concerns will be reviewed and acted upon to improve safety.

Health and Safety Organisational Structure

1. **Trustees** – Responsible for ensuring that WAC complies with health and safety legislation and for overseeing the provision of a safe working environment.

2. **Centre Manager** – Responsible for reporting health and safety issues to the Board and ensuring health, safety, and welfare are maintained across all activities. They oversee the duty managers and health and safety officers.
3. **Duty Managers** – Responsible for carrying out routine health and safety checks, managing risk assessments, ensuring compliance during events, and communicating with hirers and staff. They are also responsible for implementing evacuation procedures.
4. **Marketing Manager** – Responsible for communicating health and safety information where relevant to external parties and ensuring that any marketing materials reflect the organisation's safety practices.
5. **Bar Staff and Volunteers** – Responsible for adhering to health and safety procedures during their duties, including safe food handling and maintaining the cleanliness of public areas.

Risk Assessments and Monitoring

1. WAC conducts regular risk assessments for all activities, events, and premises. These assessments identify potential hazards and outline the necessary steps to mitigate risks. Specific risk assessments are also carried out for children's activities and events involving the public.
2. Risk assessments are reviewed annually or following any significant change in activities or premises.

Fire Safety

1. In the event of a fire, staff and visitors must leave the building via the nearest exit.
2. Fire drills are held regularly, with staff and hirers notified in advance. The office doors must be closed on exit, and people should proceed to the designated assembly point in the front garden.
3. The Centre Manager or Duty Manager is responsible for ensuring all staff and participants have exited the building and conducting a roll call at the assembly point.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

1. WAC is committed to the mental health and wellbeing of all staff, volunteers, and participants. We will actively encourage a supportive environment and make provisions for staff who may need mental health support.
2. Staff and volunteers will have access to mental health training, and there will be regular discussions around wellbeing.

Manual Handling and Lifting

1. Staff and volunteers are trained to follow safe lifting practices. When handling heavy loads:
    - Lift in stages: from the floor to the knee, then from the knee to the carrying position.
    - Hold weights close to the body and bend the legs while lifting.
    - If a load is too heavy, assistance must be requested.
2. The recommended maximum weight for lifting is 25kg for men and 16kg for women when lifting close to the body at waist height.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

1. WAC will ensure staff and volunteers do not come into contact with hazardous substances unless necessary. Any hazardous substances will be clearly labelled, stored safely, and used in well-ventilated areas with appropriate safety measures.

Training and Communication

1. All staff and volunteers will receive initial health and safety training and regular updates. This includes risk assessment procedures, fire safety, first aid, and any other relevant topics.
2. Health and safety information will be regularly communicated via meetings and notices. Staff will be encouraged to report any concerns or hazards to management immediately.

Accident and Incident Reporting

1. Any accidents or incidents must be reported to the Duty Manager and recorded in the accident/incident book. An investigation will be carried out where necessary, and corrective measures will be put in place to prevent recurrence.

Smoking Policy

1. A no-smoking policy applies inside all buildings and offices. Designated smoking areas are located outside, away from building entrances. Smokers are asked to dispose of cigarette ends safely and avoid causing litter.

First Aid

1. A first aid kit is available in the kitchen, studio, bar areas, and other designated locations. The Centre Manager or Duty Manager is the designated Health & Safety Officer and will oversee first aid procedures and equipment.
2. Staff and volunteers who are trained in first aid will be identified and readily available during activities.

Review and Monitoring

1. This Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed annually or whenever there are significant changes to activities, legislation, or staffing.
2. Feedback from staff, volunteers, and clients will be used to improve safety practices continuously.