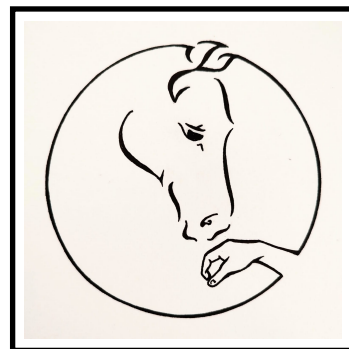


# WILTSHIRE EQUINE ASSISTED LEARNING

Wick Yard, Bath rd, Farleigh Wick  
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## **OPERATIONAL POLICY**

### **Statement of Purpose:**

WEAL offers alternative education provision through animal interactions and outdoor learning for children and young people from the age of 7 plus. Through these activities we aim to teach social communication skills, raise self awareness, self confidence and self esteem and to help our learners to have a positive experience of education. We are able to offer through a compatible exam centre an functional Maths, English and employability qualifications as well as vocational qualifications in animal care and horticulture.

We offer animal interactions for older learners to build confidence, reduce social isolation and to give respite to carers.

### **Our model of service**

We pride ourselves on our high-quality provision which is bespoke and led by the needs of each individual learner. We plan and manage sessions for our learners who have 1:1 support throughout their time with us. We also ensure that each and every one of our animals is well cared for during the process of their interactions.

All of our activities are planned or dynamically planned and risk assessed in order to safeguard the wellbeing of our clients and our animals and staff. We work with children, young people and adults who have complex needs and offer them the opportunity to enjoy our animals and the outdoors which is something they might not have experienced before. Our aim is to have happy confident learners who feel valued and empowered by the learning experiences we offer.

### **Introduction:**

We established in 2011 and are now based in Farleigh Wick near Bradford on Avon in Wiltshire. We work with learners referred to us mainly from within the Wiltshire area. Our sessions with children and young people are on a 1:1 basis and range from 1 hour to up to 16 hours per week.

Wiltshire Equine Assisted Learning has a Board of Directors, Company Secretary and a Managing Director who oversees the day to day

running of the organisation. We currently operate during term times only, for children and young people. We are open from Monday to Friday from 9am-3pm. Animals are cared for by the Managing Director all year round and she takes overall responsibility for their care and wellbeing. The Managing Director is also the key holder living on site for any care the animals require when we are closed to learners.

### **The Team:**

All staff are recruited in line with safer recruitment guidance and are DBS checked and undertake safeguarding training as well as an induction. The team consists of professionals specialising in trauma informed SEMH work and are specialist equine assisted learning facilitators. Staff have additional animal care qualifications or experience with horses, and other small animals. Staff hold individual case loads of learners and see these learners each week for sessions. Each member of staff has a supervision session each week to evaluate their practice and to review their caseload with a peer. This helps us to monitor quality and to develop staff skills.

### **Referrals:**

We are not open to the general public. We offer sessions only to people who are referred to us by other professionals or via a self referral.

Referrals may be made by schools, colleges, specialist Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinations, Education Officers and Health and social care professionals. Once a referral form is received it is reviewed by the Managing Director who will discuss the needs of the learner outlined in the referral and arrange suitable dates and times for sessions. We operate a waiting list if we have no availability and there may be a few terms wait for a suitable session.

We write reports to the referrer each term outlining progress made and will attend any multi- disciplinary case meetings or contribute reports as requested. Reports are sent out at the end of terms 2,4 and 6.

Learners will attend sessions for as long as funding is provided which may be a minimum of 6 to additional rolling 6 week blocks depending on each individual case.

### **Equality and Diversity:**

We do not exclude any learner on the grounds of colour, race, disability, behaviour or mental health from participating in our sessions. We have an accessibility plan and equality and diversity policy to ensure we are as inclusive as possible. We plan bespoke programmes of learning and risk assess the activities to ensure we meet their needs. Any risks the learner may present to the staff or animals are risk assessed if

identified. Where there is risk to our animals we will plan a programme to exclude animal interactions.

### **Documentation:**

We have all policies and procedures in place ensure the smooth operating of our centre. Staff are required to read and sign policies annually. All learners (or their parent/carer) is asked to sign a participation permission form and a data sharing form based on our Privacy Policy prior to beginning sessions with us. Termly reports will be written and can be shared with the learner/ parents/carer if requested. Facilitators keep their own records and teaching plans for each individual learner on designated password protected equipment. All reports written and sent by email are password protected.

### **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults:**

WEAL are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults attending sessions at all times. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training with the Managing Director fulfilling the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead. Policies and procedures are in place and all staff know how to raise any concerns. All staff have had a DBS check.

### **Safeguarding our animals:**

The safety and care of our animals is paramount in our work. We ensure that the five freedoms are adhered to for all of our animals. We have individual care policies for our animals and all staff are trained to observe their body language very carefully during any interactions. Animals who do not show interest in the learners or who show any signs of distress will not be asked to work during that session. All animals are given regular breaks and we communicate as a team to ensure we do not work with one animal several times during a day. Animals have access to food, water and shelter at all times and have places to hide if they do not wish to interact. All activities are risk assessed and health checks, vet visits, farrier visits, husbandry etc are planned in advance and this information is recorded.

### **Health and Safety:**

We take the Health and Safety of our learners, staff and animals very seriously. We have combined liability insurance in place. All staff have access to personal protective equipment and we have hand washing facilities all over our premises and signs reminding people to wash their hands after handling animals.

The car park has speed restrictions in place. Learners are asked to wait in their car to ensure they are safe on the premises. Facilitators will ensure the learner leaves the session safely with a responsible adult.

We have a First Aider on site at all times during sessions. Risk assessments are completed for all activities. The Health and Safety representative is the Managing Director. All accidents are recorded in the accident book and this is reviewed at least twice yearly to check for any patterns or to ensure actions have been completed to avoid similar incidents.

Staff are aware of actions to take in the event of fire and emergencies to ensure the safety of our learners, visitors and animals as well as their own safety.

Animals have access to a vet as needed and all staff know how to access the vet quickly in the event of an emergency.

**Quality Standards:**

The Managing Director monitors the quality of sessions, animal care and ensures staff are compliant with relevant legislation. Staff are encouraged to bring new ideas, implement changes, make suggestions and to highlight areas where improvements could be made to our service.

We are compliant with Safeguarding Audits required by Wiltshire Council Annually and with legislation to ensure the safe care of our learners and animals.

The standard of our teaching for vocational qualifications is monitored by moderators (internal and external).

Staff are encouraged to undertake relevant CPD with opportunities for training offered regularly. As the number of staff has now increased over the last 2 years we are introduced appraisal to ensure staff are having the opportunity to develop and grow in their job role.

**This policy should be read in conjunction with;**

Health and Safety policy

Animal Care policies.

Safeguarding policy

Risk assessments

Emergency policy

Staff training policy

Privacy Policy

**Director: Hannah Lindsay Reviewed: 1/9/2024**

**For review: 1/9/2025**