Divergent Learning Community CIC

Health & Safety Policy

Policy Owner:	Health & Safety Lead
Approved By:	DLC Founder
Date of Approval:	25 February 2026 (v2 updated 18 November 2026)
Review Date:	Annually or following significant incident

1. Purpose and Scope

Divergent Learning Community (DLC) is committed to providing a safe, healthy environment where every child, team member, and visitor can participate fully in learning and community life. This Health & Safety Policy sets out our approach to managing health and safety risks whilst supporting the diverse needs of our community.

This policy applies to all DLC premises, activities, and programmes, both on and off site. It operates alongside our other policies to ensure comprehensive protection and wellbeing for everyone in our community.

2. Our Values and Approach

DLC recognises that effective health and safety practice is built on shared responsibility, practical risk management, and genuine understanding of individual needs. Our approach reflects our core values:

- **Shared Responsibility:** Everyone contributes to maintaining a safe environment. Children participate in identifying and managing risks appropriate to their age and understanding.
- **Celebrating Diversity:** We recognise that people have different sensory experiences, movement patterns, and ways of processing information. Our health and safety practice accommodates these differences rather than treating them as problems to overcome.
- **Proportionate Risk Management:** We balance safety with opportunity, recognising that appropriate risk-taking supports learning and development. We focus on managing significant risks whilst enabling beneficial activities.
- **Practical Prevention:** We identify and address hazards proactively through regular assessment, maintenance, and review.

- **Clear Communication:** We ensure health and safety information is accessible and understood by everyone who needs it, using varied communication methods.

3. Legal Framework

This policy complies with relevant health and safety legislation and guidance, including:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- First Aid at Work Regulations 1981
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Founder

The Founder holds overall responsibility for health and safety at DLC, including:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented effectively
- Allocating adequate resources for health and safety management
- Appointing competent persons to assist with health and safety duties
- Reviewing health and safety performance regularly
- Ensuring compliance with legal requirements

4.2 Health & Safety Lead

The Health & Safety Lead manages day-to-day health and safety operations, including:

- Conducting and coordinating risk assessments
- Maintaining health and safety records and documentation
- Investigating accidents, incidents, and near misses
- Coordinating health and safety training
- Liaising with external health and safety advisors
- Monitoring compliance with health and safety procedures
- Reporting health and safety matters to the Founder

Current Health & Safety Lead:
Claudia Celi | DivergentLearningCommunity@outlook.com | 07757 749097

4.3 All Team Members

Every team member has responsibility for maintaining a safe environment. This includes:

- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others
- Following health and safety procedures and guidance
- Reporting hazards, defects, accidents, and near misses promptly
- Using equipment safely and as intended
- Attending health and safety training
- Supervising children appropriately during activities
- Not interfering with or misusing anything provided for health and safety

4.4 Children

Children are encouraged to take age-appropriate responsibility for health and safety. At DLC, children:

- Participate in understanding and managing risks during activities
- Alert team members to hazards or safety concerns they notice
- Follow safety guidance appropriate to their understanding
- Look out for each other's wellbeing
- Contribute their ideas about how to make activities safer

5. Risk Assessment

DLC conducts risk assessments for all activities, premises, and equipment. Our approach to risk assessment is:

- **Proportionate:** Assessment depth matches the complexity and risk level of the activity
- **Practical:** Focusing on significant risks that require control measures
- **Participatory:** Involving team members and, where appropriate, children in identifying hazards and solutions
- **Documented:** Significant findings and control measures are recorded
- **Reviewed:** Assessments are reviewed regularly and after incidents or significant changes

5.1 Types of Risk Assessment

- **General premises risk assessment:** Covering the building, facilities, and fixed equipment (reviewed annually)

- **Activity risk assessments:** For specific activities such as cooking, outdoor learning, trips, sports
- **Individual risk assessments:** For children with specific health, sensory, or mobility considerations that require tailored support
- **Fire risk assessment:** Identifying fire hazards and ensuring appropriate controls (reviewed annually or after significant changes)
- **Off-site visit assessments:** For trips and activities away from DLC premises

5.2 Risk Assessment Process

Risk assessments follow a systematic approach:

- **Identify hazards:** What could cause harm?
- **Identify who might be harmed:** Consider all users including children with specific needs
- **Evaluate risks:** How likely is harm and how serious could it be?
- **Implement control measures:** What steps will reduce or eliminate the risk?
- **Record findings:** Document significant hazards and control measures
- **Review and update:** Check assessments remain valid and effective

6. Premises and Equipment

6.1 Building Maintenance

DLC maintains premises to a safe standard through:

- Regular inspection and maintenance schedules
- Prompt repair of defects and damage
- Adequate lighting, heating, and ventilation
- Clean, well-maintained toilet and washing facilities
- Safe access and egress routes kept clear
- Appropriate security measures

6.2 Equipment Safety

All equipment used at DLC is:

- Appropriate for its intended use and user age/ability
- Maintained in good working order
- Inspected regularly according to manufacturer guidance and risk
- Stored safely when not in use
- Used only by those who have received appropriate instruction
- Removed from service if faulty or damaged

6.3 Statutory Inspections

The following statutory inspections and tests are carried out as required:

- Electrical installation testing (every 5 years)
- Portable appliance testing (PAT) according to risk
- Fire alarm and emergency lighting testing (weekly/six-monthly/annually)
- Fire extinguisher servicing (annually)
- Gas appliances and installations (annually)
- Water system risk assessment and testing (legionella)

Records of all inspections and tests are maintained and available for review.

7. Fire Safety

DLC maintains robust fire safety procedures to protect everyone using our premises. Our fire safety arrangements include:

- Comprehensive fire risk assessment reviewed annually
- Clear fire evacuation procedures displayed prominently
- Regular fire drills (at least termly) with evaluation and learning
- Maintained fire detection and alarm systems tested weekly
- Appropriate fire-fighting equipment readily available
- Emergency lighting tested regularly
- Fire exits and routes kept clear at all times
- Fire doors maintained and not propped open
- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for anyone requiring assistance to evacuate
- Fire safety training for all team members during induction and regularly thereafter

Fire evacuation procedures are explained to children in accessible ways, and we practice evacuations regularly so everyone knows what to do. We recognise that some children may find fire alarms distressing due to sensory sensitivities, and we work with families to develop appropriate support strategies whilst maintaining safety.

8. First Aid and Medical Needs

8.1 First Aid Provision

DLC ensures adequate first aid provision through:

- At least one qualified first aider present during all DLC sessions
- Appropriately stocked first aid kits readily accessible
- Additional first aid kits available for trips and outdoor activities

- Clear procedures for summoning emergency medical assistance
- Regular first aid training updates to maintain qualifications

Qualified First Aiders: Claudia Celi

8.2 Managing Medical Conditions

For children with ongoing medical conditions, DLC works with families to develop individual healthcare plans that set out:

- The child’s specific medical needs
- Any medication required, including administration procedures
- What to do in an emergency
- Any adjustments or support needed during activities
- Emergency contact details

All team members working with a child are made aware of their healthcare plan and know how to respond to their needs.

8.3 Medication

DLC's approach to medication is as follows: parents and carers are responsible for administering routine medication before or after DLC sessions wherever possible.

Emergency medication (such as inhalers and EpiPens) must be provided by parents, clearly labelled with the child's name, and kept accessible at DLC during sessions.

In a life-threatening emergency, community members will administer emergency medication and call 999 immediately. All emergency medication requirements are documented in the child's individual healthcare plan, agreed with parents prior to the child starting at DLC.

8.4 Scope of Medical Support

DLC can support children who require routine medication administration and straightforward healthcare management as part of their daily needs. However, DLC does not currently have the specialist resources or trained personnel to provide:

- Complex clinical procedures
- Continuous medical monitoring
- Specialist therapeutic interventions requiring clinical qualifications
- Crisis mental health support

During our application process, we discuss each child’s medical and healthcare needs openly with families to ensure DLC can provide

appropriate support. Where a child's needs exceed our current capacity, we work constructively with families to identify suitable alternative provision.

9. Accident and Incident Management

9.1 Recording and Reporting

All accidents, incidents, and near misses are recorded promptly and accurately. Records include:

- Date, time, and location
- People involved
- What happened and any contributing factors
- Injury details and first aid given
- Follow-up action taken
- Name and signature of person recording

Parents are informed promptly of any accident or incident involving their child.

9.2 Investigation and Learning

DLC investigates accidents and incidents to understand what happened and prevent recurrence. Investigations:

- Focus on identifying system improvements rather than assigning blame
- Involve relevant team members and, where appropriate, children
- Result in documented learning and action plans
- Lead to updates of risk assessments and procedures where needed
- Are shared with the team to promote wider learning

9.3 RIDDOR Reporting

Serious accidents and dangerous occurrences are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under RIDDOR regulations when they result in:

- Death or major injury
- Injury requiring hospitalisation for more than 24 hours
- Specified injuries (fractures, amputations, loss of sight, etc.)
- Occupational diseases
- Dangerous occurrences

10. Activities and Educational Visits

DLC believes that well-managed activities and visits provide valuable learning opportunities. All activities and visits are:

- Risk assessed before taking place
- Led by competent team members
- Run with appropriate adult-to-child ratios for the activity and group
- Supported by clear briefings for team members and children
- Covered by parental consent
- Equipped with appropriate first aid and emergency contact information
- Reviewed afterwards to identify learning and improvements

For higher-risk activities or residential visits, additional planning and approval procedures apply.

11. Working Environment

DLC provides a working environment that supports health and wellbeing:

- **Ergonomics:** Workstations and furniture are adjustable to support comfortable working
- **Sensory Environment:** We consider lighting, noise levels, and sensory input, providing quiet spaces and sensory breaks as needed
- **Temperature and Ventilation:** Maintained at comfortable levels with adequate fresh air
- **Welfare Facilities:** Clean toilets, washing facilities, drinking water, and rest areas available
- **Manual Handling:** Equipment and techniques provided to minimise injury risk

12. Substances and COSHH

DLC manages hazardous substances safely through:

- Risk assessment of all substances used (cleaning products, art materials, etc.)
- Using less hazardous alternatives wherever possible
- Secure storage away from children’s access
- Clear labelling in original containers
- Safety data sheets readily available
- Training for team members on safe use
- Appropriate personal protective equipment provided

13. Transport and Vehicles

When DLC uses vehicles to transport children:

- Drivers hold appropriate licences and insurance
- Vehicles are roadworthy, insured, and regularly maintained
- Appropriate child restraints and seat belts are used
- Passenger numbers do not exceed vehicle capacity
- Parental consent covers transport arrangements
- Emergency contact details and first aid equipment are carried

14. Violence and Aggression

DLC is committed to preventing violence and aggression against team members, children, and visitors. Our approach includes:

- Risk assessing activities and situations that might trigger aggressive behaviour
- Training team members in de-escalation techniques
- Clear procedures for managing challenging behaviour (see Behaviour Policy)
- Support systems for team members who experience incidents
- Recording and reviewing all incidents to identify patterns and prevention strategies

We recognise that some children may express distress or overwhelm through physical responses. Our approach focuses on understanding triggers, preventing escalation, and supporting children to develop alternative coping strategies.

15. Lone Working

When team members work alone, DLC ensures their safety through:

- Risk assessment of lone working situations
- Check-in procedures
- Access to communication equipment
- Clear procedures for raising concerns or summoning help
- Arrangements for higher-risk tasks to be completed by two people

16. Training and Competence

All team members receive health and safety training appropriate to their role:

- **Induction training** covering this policy, emergency procedures, and role-specific safety requirements

- **Ongoing training** as new equipment, activities, or procedures are introduced
- **Refresher training** at regular intervals
- **Specialist training** for specific responsibilities (first aid, fire safety, etc.)

Training records are maintained to ensure all team members remain current with their requirements.

17. Monitoring and Review

Health and safety performance is monitored through:

- Regular workplace inspections
- Review of accident and incident records
- Audits of compliance with procedures
- Team member feedback and suggestions
- Children's input on safety matters
- Termly reports to the Founder

This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation or guidance changes
- Following a serious incident
- Significant changes to premises, activities, or organisation
- Monitoring identifies areas requiring improvement

18. Emergency Procedures

DLC has established procedures for responding to emergencies including:

- **Fire:** Evacuate via nearest exit to assembly point, call 999, account for everyone
- **Medical Emergency:** Administer first aid, call 999 if serious, contact parents, preserve scene if needed
- **Intruder/Security Threat:** Move children to safe location, call police, account for everyone, do not confront
- **Lockdown:** Secure all external doors/windows, move everyone inside, stay away from windows, await all-clear
- **Missing Child:** Immediate search, notify the Founder, call police if not found quickly, inform parents
- **Bomb Threat:** Evacuate, call 999, do not use mobile phones, await police instruction

Emergency contact details for key personnel and external services are displayed prominently and available on mobile devices for trips.

19. Key Contacts

Internal Contacts:
Health & Safety Lead: Claudia Celi | DivergentLearningCommunity@outlook.com | 07757749097
Founder: Claudia Celi | DivergentLearningCommunity@outlook.com | 07757749097
First Aiders: To be confirmed as DLC grows

External Contacts:
Emergency Services: 999
HSE Incident Contact Centre: 0345 300 9923

Local Authority Health & Safety Team:
London Borough of Hillingdon
Email: foodhealthandsafety@hillingdon.gov.uk
Environmental Health:
London Borough of Hillingdon
Email: foodhealthandsafety@hillingdon.gov.uk
Tel: 01895 277800

Contact & Legal Information
DIVERGENT LEARNING COMMUNITY CIC
Registered in England and Wales | Company Number: 16765759
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This policy was first approved on 25 February 2026, updated on 18 November 2026 (version 2), and will be reviewed by 18 November 2027.
Divergent Learning Community is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all.