ROYAL BOTANIC GARDEN EDINBURGH

Task Assessed: School/Educational group visits to all fours gardens of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE)
Persons at risk: Groups leaders, group members; RBGE Staff, volunteers, students & visitors

Responsibility for the group's welfare on a visit to RBGE is with the activity organiser through their leaders.
We expect groups to carry out their own risk assessments – please use the information below to assist you with this

NOTE: If first aid or emergency assistance is required during your visit, please phone one of the numbers below. If an ambulance is needed dial 999 first, then let RBGE staff know.

Emergency numbers:
RBGE Edinburgh **0131 552 7171** (Main reception) or **0131 248 2909** (Welcome desk, John Hope Gateway)
Logan 01776 860231
Benmore 01369 706261
Dawyck 01721 760254

RISK ASSESSMENT – EDUCATION: Schools/Educational Group Visits

Reviewer	Date	Changes
Harry Soolia	18/02/25	Review
Cath Ashby	10/11/25	Updates to some sections

Reviewer	Date	Changes
Harry Soolia	02/11/26	Review

RISK RATING is a measure of (A) Potential severity & (B) Likelihood
RE-ASSESS RISK RATING as and when task changes or proposed actions have been applied.

RISK RATING - GUIDANCE ONLY			LIKELIHOOD				
			PROBABLE (3)	POSSIBLE (2)	IMPROBABLE (1)	EXTREMELY REMOTE (0)	*PROBABLE - happens repeatedly / expected *POSSIBLE - potential exists / uncommon *IMPROBABLE - rarely occurs / unlikely *EXTREMELY REMOTE – approaches zero chance
SEVERITY	FATAL/DISABILITY	(3)	HIGH	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	
	MAJOR INJURY	(2)	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	
	MINOR INJURY	(1)	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW	
	NEGILIGBLE	(0)	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	

Hazard	(A) potential Severity	(B) Likelihood	(A x B) Base Risk rating	Controls & Monitoring Procedures	(A1) Potential Severity after controls	(B2) Likelihood after controls	(A1 x B2) New Risk rating	Proposed action to further reduce risk by Garden team
General access hazards								
Risk of injury – slips, trips, areas of active work	2	2	**4**	Warn group to take care in areas when grass or paths are wet & choose suitable locations for active games. Always keep an eye on your groups. Never cross any form of barrier/rope.	2	1	**2**	Garden inspected after extreme weather. Areas of active work or known issues are roped off
Events in the garden **Risk** of injury, eg tripping, on cables and lighting	2	2	**4**	There may be extra vehicles and cabling and lighting laid in areas of the garden for events. Take care and avoid these areas in activities. Never cross any form of barrier/rope.	2	1	**2**	
Ponds/water features **Risk** of drowning	3	2	**6**	Warn group to be careful and not to go beyond barriers. Supervise carefully. Life-saving equipment is permanently located next to all the water features. Contact emergency numbers above if assistance is required.	3	1	**3**	
Animal stings/bites								
Risk of sting leading to anaphylactic shock	3	2	**6**	Group leaders are responsible for managing any known allergies in young people, for bringing appropriate medication, and ability to administer it.	3	1	**3**	

Risk of sting or animal bite leading to minor injury or infection	1	2	**2**	Warn group not to try to touch wild animals/birds. Guide children to be calm around stinging insects.	1	1	**1**	
Risk of contracting Lyme's Disease from tick bite	2	2	**4**	Ticks may be present in longer grass and wilder areas in Benmore, Logan and Dawyck gardens. Take preventative measures to avoid tick bites and follow recommended advice by NHS.	2	1	**2**	
Injuries from plants								
Risk of injury by plant spines, twigs or similar	1	2	**2**	Be aware that some plants have spines and take care when touching. Warn group to be careful with eyes nears twigs and spines at eye level.	1	1	**1**	
Poisoning Risk of poisoning/stomach after eating plant or fungi material	3	2	**6**	Warn group not to eat any plants. Contact **NHS DIRECT by calling 111** for first aid advice if you think a member of your group has ingested plant material in the garden. Call garden emergency numbers for immediate first aid assistance (at top of sheet). Keep a sample of the plant if possible for identification.	3	1	**3**	
Plants Risk of rash to skin through contact with plants, eg sap or irritant hairs	1	2	**2**	If any of your group have known skin or plant allergies, then long sleeves should be worn and touching any plant sap should be avoided. Plant diversity prevents any absolute guarantee of a person not encountering an unknown skin allergen or having a reaction. Wash hands after touching anything in nature.	1	1	**1**	

				Get advice from doctor or **NHS DIRECT by calling 111** if a rash appears after being in the garden				
Weather								
Sun Risk of heat stroke	2	2	**4**	Find shade as much as possible on very hot days. Come prepared with suitable outdoor clothing, e.g., hats & bring bottles of water. Keep liquids up.	2	1	**2**	
Sun Risk of sunburn or heat rash	1	2	**2**	Group participants should carry sun lotion for personal use. Find shade.	1	1	**1**	
Rain & Cold Risk of hypothermia	3	2	**6**	Come prepared with suitable footwear and outdoor gear. Keep an eye on group.	3	1	**3**	
High Wind Risk from falling tree debris or glass	3	2	**6**	Avoid standing under leafy trees in windy weather as light debris may still fall. The gardens may shut during high winds, sometimes closing at short notice. Your visit may be cancelled for safety reasons. If high winds are forecast phone for advice in advance of your visit: RBGE Edinburgh 0131 552 7171 – Main reception 0131 248 2909 – John Hope Gateway Visitors on site will be alerted by staff of safe routes and asked to leave the garden. Respect signs and barriers and follow suggested alternative routes in garden.	3	1	**3**	Tree health surveys carried out annually and proactive management of trees. Garden staff will monitor and clear the garden in event of rising gusts above our safety threshold.
Lightning	3	2	**6**	If caught in a storm, follow advice by Met Office. Seek shelter. Avoid water and find a	3	1	**3**	If electrical storms are forecast Garden staff will

Risk of being hit by lightning or injured by lightning strikes				low-lying position away from trees, poles and metal objects.				decide on whether to shut the garden. Your visit may be cancelled or cut short if necessary
Allergies								
Food Risk of anaphylactic shock leading to death	3	2	**6**	Group leaders are responsible for any known food allergies in young people, for bringing appropriate medication and ability to administer it. Be aware that visitors sometimes feed squirrels with peanuts so you may find remnants on the ground.	3	1	**3**	
Hay fever	2	2	**4**	If children are known to have hay fever they may wish to avoid certain activities. Being in the garden may set off their symptoms at different times of the year. Follow advice by NHS. Hay fever may interact with and trigger asthma so watch children carefully for signs of breathing difficulties and ensure inhalers are carried and administered when necessary.	1	2	**2**	
Machinery								
Risk of injury from tractors & trailers and vehicles on the paths	3	2	**6**	Warn group that we operate moving vehicles on main paths in the garden. Some are quiet electric vehicles and you may not hear them approach. Take care when crossing and be vigilant when walking. Give clear boundaries when doing any activities on lawns and avoid running onto paths. Move on to grass to allow vehicles to pass when on roads in the garden.	3	1	**3**	Drivers stick to speed limit & are vigilant around groups.

Risk of injury from lawnmowers	3	2	**6**	Lawnmowers operate on lawn areas. Group leaders are vigilant and move away to another area if necessary. Children must not chase mowers or other machinery.	3	1	**3**	Operators are vigilant around groups.
Other risks to groups								
Risk of accidental injury by another child	1	2	**2**	Group leaders are responsible for the behaviour of the group. Please supervise at all times.	1	1	**1**	
Risk of children becoming lost	3	2	**6**	Group leaders are responsible for any participants under their care. If a child becomes separated from the group contact RBGE staff to assist. Contact numbers: RBGE Edinburgh 0131 552 7171 – Main reception 0131 248 2909 – John Hope Gateway Logan 01776 860231 Benmore 01369 706261 Dawyck 01721 760254	3	1	**3**	Garden staff assist with search according to the agreed procedure
Risk from visitors	3	2	**6**	If you suspect any suspicious activity by a visitor phone the numbers above to report or call 999 direct for police in emergencies. Gather your group and make your way to a more public area with other people present.	3	1	**3**	Visitor welcome team staff on patrol are vigilant
Safeguarding risks	3	2	**6**	Toilets and spaces are shared with members of the public. Supervise group carefully. If you would like to report a safeguarding concern email Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL): dsl@rbge.org.uk	3	1	**3**	Garden staff follow guidance in safeguarding policy and procedures

Indoor spaces								
Risk of injury in temporary shelters	1	2	**2**	Group leaders are responsible for safe entry, exit and use of temporary shelters	1	1	**1**	Garden staff carry out regular checks on shelters.
Risk of injury in indoor spaces	1	2	**2**	Ask group to take care and walk inside buildings.	1	1	**1**	Garden staff check indoor spaces and use signage or barriers to warn visitors of hazards.
Risk of injury in case of fire and fire evacuation in buildings	3	2	**6**	If a fire alarm goes off gather group in a calm manner. Count and check all are present. Follow instructions and evacuate building.	3	1	**3**	Garden staff will guide the evacuation of the building including assisting with any accessibility needs.

Signed: Harry Soolia (outdoor learning officer) **Date: 02/11/26**