TAO Independent School – Health & Safety Policy

1. General Statement of Health & Safety

TAO Independent School is committed to ensuring the highest standards of health, safety, emotional wellbeing, and welfare for pupils, staff, visitors, and contractors. Our therapeutic, trauma-informed and outdoor-based education model requires a robust and dynamic approach to safety management.

The Proprietor and Headteacher ensure compliance with:

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) – Part 3
- Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (as amended), where applicable
- DfE “Health & Safety in Schools” guidance
- KCSIE 2026 (safeguarding, contextual safety & mental health)
- Outdoor industry best practice (NGB standards)

Every pupil’s physical, emotional, relational and mental health safety is central to the TAO model.

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2. Our Commitment

TAO Independent School:
• Takes all reasonable steps to provide safe physical and emotional conditions for all pupils and staff.
• Ensures compliance with all relevant legislation.
• Provides access to competent health & safety advice, including specialist outdoor/adventure support.
• Recognises that safety must be embedded across all curriculum areas and environments.
• Ensures staff receive health and safety, safeguarding, outdoor and activity-specific training appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

• Reviews health and safety arrangements, policies and risk assessments at appropriate intervals and following significant change, incident or identified need.

Good working practice, dynamic situational awareness and predictable, relationally safe communication underpin our culture of safety.

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3. Responsibilities

3.1 Proprietor

The Proprietor is responsible for ensuring:

- Adequate resources for H&S implementation.
- Safe systems of work across classrooms, outdoors and adventure environments.
- Oversight of audits, reviews, incidents and compliance.

3.2 Headteacher (Nominated H&S Lead)

The Headteacher:

- Leads the entire H&S system including SOPs, training, checks matrix and policy review.
- Ensures risk assessments are in place and reviewed.
- Oversees emergency responses, drills and flowcharts.
- Ensures staff competence is appropriate to their roles, activities and responsibilities.
- Provides the Proprietor with appropriate assurance regarding health and safety performance, significant incidents and material risks.

3.3 Safeguarding Interface

The Headteacher/DSL ensures that safeguarding considerations which overlap with health and safety, including missing pupils, emotional wellbeing, serious violence, security and individual vulnerability, are managed in accordance with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

3.4 Outdoor Education Lead

Responsible for:

- AALA-aligned activity oversight.

- PPE/equipment inspections.
- Weather assessments and dynamic RA.
- Technical sign-off for instructors.
- SOP compliance.

3.5 Teachers & Support Staff

All staff must:

- Supervise pupils in accordance with the School's safeguarding, behaviour and trauma-informed practice arrangements.
- Maintain safe classrooms and outdoor learning spaces.
- Follow risk assessments, SOPs and equipment protocols.
- Report hazards immediately.
- Role-model safe behaviour and regulation.

3.6 Premises Lead / Site Lead

Responsible for:

- Building checks, fire systems, alarms, lighting.
- Recording and escalating any defects.
- Maintaining cleanliness and ensuring safe storage of substances (COSHH).

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Follow instructions and safety boundaries.
- Engage respectfully.
- Report concerns.

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4. Hazard Assessments & Risk Management

TAO undertakes and reviews:

- **General risk assessments** (sites, activities, classrooms)
- **Individual pupil risk assessments** (including emotional and trauma indicators)
- **Activity-specific risk assessments** (climbing, caving, MTB, water, bushcraft)

- **Venue risk assessments** (woodland, rivers, caves, moorland)
- **Premises risk assessments** (fire, lighting, slips/trips)

Dynamic risk assessment is embedded into all outdoor and adventure sessions.

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5. Premises Safety (Indoors)

5.1 Building Environment

- Fire alarms, emergency lighting, CCTV, maglocks installed.
- Asbestos report held in Building File.
- Premises are monitored routinely, with defects and hazards identified, recorded and addressed according to risk.
- Evacuation routes signposted.
- Heating, lighting and ventilation monitored.

5.2 Classrooms

- Trauma-informed layout.
- Calm spaces available.
- Safe storage of equipment.
- Electrical equipment is maintained and inspected according to risk, manufacturer guidance and applicable electrical safety requirements.

5.3 Cleaning & COSHH

- Substances stored securely.
- Cleaning staff trained in COSHH.
- Waste removed daily.

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6. Outdoor Learning Safety (Non-Adventure)

Outdoor learning is a central part of TAO's curriculum.

Procedures include:

- Daily weather checks.
- Boundary setting.
- Venue sweep before sessions.

- Staff communication devices.
- Environmental hazard identification.

Bushcraft-specific safety:

- 1:3 ratio for knife/fire use.
- Fire buckets, water, extinguishers present.
- Tool use supervised directly.

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7. Adventure Activity Safety (AALA-Aligned)

All climbing, caving, canoeing, mountain biking and similar adventure activities are delivered in accordance with TAO's activity-specific SOPs, risk assessments and relevant technical requirements**.**

7.1 Staff Competency

- NGB qualifications (RCI, BC, MBCUK, LCMLA etc.).
- Site-specific sign-off.
- Technical competence is maintained and reviewed in accordance with relevant NGB standards, AALA requirements where applicable, activity procedures and identified need.

- **7.2 SOP Requirements (Predeparture)**
- Weather checked.
- Pupil risk assessments reviewed.
- Location pinned and sent to office.
- Return time recorded.
- Emergency kit carried.
- PPE checked.

7.3 Ratios

- TAO ordinarily operates adventure activities at a maximum ratio of 1:3, subject to any lower ratio required by the activity risk assessment, NGB guidance, licence conditions, venue or individual pupil need.

- **7.4 PPE & Equipment**
- Daily visual checks.

- Technical equipment is inspected and maintained at intervals determined by manufacturer guidance, relevant technical standards, competent-person requirements and TAO equipment procedures.
- Faulty kit quarantined.

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8. Emotional, Mental Health & Trauma-Aware Safety

TAO recognises that emotional and mental health safety are equal to physical safety.

We ensure:

- Staff receive trauma-informed and regulation-focused training appropriate to their role and responsibilities.
- Predictable routines, co-regulation and relational approaches.
- Pupils receive emotional check-ins.
- Activity risk assessments include emotional triggers.
- Outdoor environments adapted for sensory needs.
- Reflective supervision or management support is available according to role and need.

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9. Missing Child Procedure

Any incident involving a pupil who is missing or unaccounted for is managed in accordance with the School's Missing Child Procedure. Staff must act immediately, secure the remaining group, alert the Headteacher/DSL and contact emergency services without delay where the pupil's vulnerability, location or circumstances indicate immediate risk.

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10. Emergency Response (Using TAO Flowchart Levels 1–4)

Level 1 – Minor Misfortune

- Treat on site.
- Inform office.
- Record.

Level 2 – Minor Event / Delayed Return

- First aid within award remit.
- Inform office → parents.

- Incident form completed.

Level 3 – Serious Event

- Emergency first aid.
- Move group to safety.
- Office → Headteacher → parents.
- Senior staff attend.
- Emotional support offered.

Level 4 – Major/Fatal Event

- Attempt contact.
- **999 immediately.**
- Notify Headteacher, DSL, Proprietor.
- No media statements.
- Senior staff liaise with emergency services.
- The Headteacher will ensure that any statutory notification, including RIDDOR or notification to the relevant regulator, is made where the applicable reporting threshold is met**.**

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11. Fire Safety

- Weekly alarm tests.
- Termly evacuation drill.
- All exits kept clear.
- Fire file maintained.
- Staff trained in response.

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12. Contractors & Visitors

- All visitors sign in.
- Contractors follow safety briefing.
- Visitors and contractors are supervised or managed according to the purpose of their visit, safeguarding status, checks completed and identified risk.

- “Permit to work” arrangements are used for high-risk works where required by the relevant premises or contractor-control procedures.

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13. Vehicles & Transport Safety

- Vehicles MOT’d, insured, maintained.
- Seatbelts checked before departure.
- Journey plans logged.
- Staff carry communication devices.

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14. Equipment, Plant & Maintenance

Daily:

- PPE & kit checks
- Premises sweep
- Vehicle checks

Weekly:

- Fire alarm pulse test
- Bike checks
- Climbing gear visual check

Monthly:

- PPE and technical equipment inspections in accordance with equipment-management procedures, competent-person requirements and manufacturer/NGB guidance.
- Activity equipment audit

Annual:

- Electrical inspection and testing at intervals determined by risk and applicable requirements.
- Fire system servicing
- Full premises audit

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15. Checks Matrix

Check	Frequency	Responsible
Premises Sweep	Daily	Headteacher / Site Lead
PPE Check	Daily	

16. Accident, Incident & Near Miss Reporting

- All incidents are recorded using TAO's standard forms.
- Serious incidents are reviewed by the Headteacher and DSL.
- Patterns and trends are monitored to identify risks.
- RIDDOR reporting completed by the Headteacher where required.
- Parents are informed of all significant incidents.

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17. Work-Related Violence, Challenging Behaviour & De-Escalation

- Staff follow trauma-informed and emotional coaching approaches.-informed and emotional-coaching approaches.
- Restrictive physical intervention is not used as a routine behaviour-management strategy. Staff may use reasonable and proportionate force where immediately necessary to prevent harm, in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy and applicable statutory guidance**.**
- Behaviour is viewed through a communication and needs based lens.-based lens.
- Significant incidents of aggression, dysregulation or unsafe conduct are recorded and reviewed in accordance with the Behaviour Management and Safeguarding policies.
- Staff receive training in recognising fight/flight/freeze responses.

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18. Occupational Health & Staff Wellbeing

- Reflective supervision is provided for staff.
- Staff may access occupational health support where required.
- Adjustments are made for staff with injuries, health needs or disabilities.

- Staff wellbeing and work-related stress are addressed through line management, supervision, occupational health or other appropriate support arrangements.

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19. Expectant Mothers (Staff, Visitors, Contractors)

- Risk assessments will be adapted for expectant mothers.
- Outdoor and adventure environments may require specific adjustments.
- Manual handling, uneven terrain, cold-water activities and smoke or fire exposure will be individually risk assessed and adjusted where necessary.
- Confidentiality will be respected.

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20. COSHH – Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

- Cleaning products and chemicals stored in locked cupboards.
- Data sheets kept for all substances.
- Staff trained in safe use and storage.
- Fire-lighting materials (e.g., gels, accelerants) stored separately and used under supervision only.

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21. Manual Handling

- Staff receive manual-handling information, instruction or training where their role and identified risks require it.
- Heavy equipment (bikes, canoes) lifted with assistance.
- Pupils must not undertake manual-handling activities which expose them to unacceptable risk.

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22. Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

- Staff using computers for prolonged periods receive a basic DSE assessment.
- Adjustable seating and safe posture guidance provided.

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23. Lone Working

- One-to-one work with pupils may take place where educationally appropriate and must be conducted in accordance with safeguarding, lone-working and professional-boundary arrangements.
- Where required, staff must ensure:
    - the Headteacher is aware of their location
    - they have a communication device
    - doors remain secured

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24. Educational Visits & Offsite Learning

- All visits follow TAO Offsite SOPs and adventure protocols.
- Educational visits and off-site learning are planned and risk managed in accordance with TAO's relevant SOPs, venue information, pupil needs and activity requirements.
- Communication devices carried.
- Weather and environmental conditions checked.
- Emergency procedures followed as per Levels 1–4.

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25. Work Experience

- Pupils accessing work placements (e.g., MTB mechanics, Moorland Restoration) have:
    - placement RA
    - safeguarding checks completed for provider
    - supported and monitored by TAO in accordance with the placement risk assessment, safeguarding arrangements and individual pupil needs

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26. Safe Use of Ladders & Working at Height

- Ladders and work-at-height equipment may only be used by authorised and competent persons in accordance with the relevant risk assessment.
- Pupils must not undertake maintenance or premises work at height. Educational climbing and adventure activities are managed separately under TAO's adventure activity procedures.

- Regular checks made on ladders and access equipment.

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27. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Adventure PPE includes helmets, harnesses, buoyancy aids,
- PPE must be worn as instructed.
- Faulty PPE must be removed from use immediately, and quarantined
- Technical PPE is recorded within the School's asset-management system, with issue, condition, inspection and quarantine arrangements maintained. Independent competent-person inspection is undertaken at the intervals required by the equipment type, manufacturer guidance, relevant technical standards and TAO's equipment-management procedures.

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28. Purchasing & Safe Use of Equipment

- Only approved suppliers are used.
- Outdoor Education Lead signs off technical kit.
- Any equipment posing risk is checked prior to use.

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29. Security & Personal Safety

- Access is controlled by maglocks and entry system.
- CCTV monitors entrances, the pupil break out room, mentoring room and reception.
- Visitors are identified and supervised or managed in accordance with the School's safeguarding, visitor and premises-security arrangements**.**
- Staff carry communication devices on outdoor sessions.

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30. Monitoring, Review & Evaluation

Health and safety monitoring is proportionate to risk and includes routine premises checks, activity and PPE checks, fire-safety testing and drills, technical-equipment inspection, incident review and periodic strategic review. Frequencies are determined by statutory requirements, manufacturer guidance, competent-person advice, activity-specific procedures and identified risk. The Headteacher maintains operational oversight of health and safety, with strategic assurance provided to the Proprietor. A formal policy review takes place at least annually and sooner where

significant change or incident requires it.

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31. Associated Documents & Appendices

The following documents support this policy:

- Emergency Response Flowchart (Levels 1–4)
- Missing Child Action Card
- Daily/Weekly/Monthly Checks Matrix
- Adventure Activity SOPs
- Premises Daily Checklist
- Offsite/Outdoor Venue Risk Assessments
- Individual Pupil Risk Assessments
- Fire Evacuation Plan
- First Aid & Medication Policy
- Allergy Safety & Anaphylaxis Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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32. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually,
- after any significant incident,
- in line with regulatory changes,
- following significant regulatory change, competent-person advice, inspection findings or other material changes affecting health and safety arrangements.

Legal & Statutory Framework

• Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

• Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

• Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

• Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

• Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

• Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

• Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

• Work at Height Regulations 2005

• Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (as amended), where applicable • Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended)

• Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Version Updates

Version	Date	Author	Review / Changes	Approved By
2.0	09/09/26	Daniel Giblin	09/09/27	Headteacher / Proprietor