

## **The Old Library Health and Safety Policy**

The Chair is Helen Verity

Date of policy development: 03/01/2026

This policy was signed off by the Trustees on 07/01/2026

This policy will be reviewed on: 07/01/2027

Signature of Chair: 

## **Statement of Intent**

The trustees of The Old Library recognise and accept their responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions that are safe, healthy and comply with all statutory requirements and codes of practice and to ensure the health and safety of volunteers, users of The Old Library and any other person who may be affected by the operations of The Old Library.

The Old Library will endeavour to create and develop a working environment in which there is an awareness of the vital importance of Health and Safety and which encourages all employees and volunteers to participate in developing and practicing safe working methods and to have regard for the welfare of themselves and others.

## **Procedure**

### **Organisational Responsibility**

#### **Trustees**

The Trustees hold the following overall responsibilities

- The provision and maintenance of a safe place of work with safe access to and egress from it
- A working environment that is free from hazard and risk to health
- Equipment and systems of work that are safe and free from risk to health
- Such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety of volunteers and users of the premises
- Formal systems for identifying hazards and risk
- Adequate first aid facilities
- Adequate means of preventing and fighting fires
- The monitoring and review of the implementation of the health and safety policy

The trustees have delegated responsibility to the Chair.

The Chair will:

- maintain safety records
- conduct assessments and inspections
- ensure that any portable electrical equipment is not used until it is PAT tested by a qualified electrician
- ensure the health and safety policy is adhered to
- conduct the investigation of all accidents and conduct assessments and inspections

- they will familiarise themselves with all relevant health and safety legislation in order to advise the trustees.
- The Chair may delegate any or all of these tasks to nominated Trustees or Volunteers, but retains responsibility for the execution of these functions

The Volunteer Trainer will be responsible for the health and safety training of the volunteers and will:

- Ensure that on joining The Old Library all new volunteers are familiarised in Health and Safety matters appropriate to their duties, including accident reporting, emergency procedures, fire precautions, use of fire appliances, code of staff conduct and location of first aid box.
- Ensure that all volunteers are provided with adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure health and safety of employees and volunteers
- Ensure that all volunteers are familiar with The Old Library's Health and Safety at Work Policy
- Regularly inspect the premises with regard to the suitability of equipment provided for health and safety of volunteers and library users, including the First Aid box, regularly review work methods and practices to ensure safe systems of work.
- Will be responsible for ensuring all staff know that both volunteers on duty are jointly responsible for evacuating the premises in the event of fire or other serious incidents.

- **Volunteers**

The success of the Health and Safety Policy and its implementation cannot be ensured unless there is active co-operation from the volunteers. All volunteers have a statutory duty to promote their health and safety and the health and safety of others who may be affected by their actions. It is important for all to be aware that they can be made personally liable for any hazard that they create or contribute to which causes harm to another colleague.

All volunteers:

- Shall make themselves familiar with and conform to the Health and Safety Policy and observe safety rules at all times
- Will work safely and efficiently and with due regard for the health and safety and welfare of others including the public
- Report promptly accidents and incidents that might lead to injuries
- Report unsafe conditions that may arise
- Co-operate with management when accidents require investigation
- Comply with statutory obligations
- Shall not interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interest of safety
- Given all the above points shall use any equipment appropriately

## **Administrative Arrangements**

### **1. First Aid and Accident Reporting**

#### **First Aid**

During the induction volunteers will be shown the first aid box available at The Old Library and its contents.

#### **Accident Reporting**

- All accidents, however minor, must be reported to the Chair, using an accident report form. Near misses, potential hazards and any damage must also be reported immediately.
- All accidents (near misses, potential hazards and any damage) will be investigated by the Chair or another delegated Trustee, who will take responsibility for ensuring that corrective action is taken where appropriate to prevent recurrence and informing the Chair of the action taken
- The Chair will notify the appropriate authorities where necessary.

### **2. Emergency Procedures**

#### **Fire Procedures**

On discovering a fire, you should

- Sound the alarm
- Ensure that all members of the public have left the premises
- Ensure that any person having accessed the lower floor, leaves by way of the lower floor fire exit
- Leave the building as quickly as possible (without running) by the nearest exit, and go straight to the assembly point, on the pavement at the junction of St Albans Road and Skircoat Green Road  
DO NOT stop to collect your personal belongings  
DO NOT re-enter the building until advised by the Fire Service or senior member of staff that it is safe to do so
- Ensure that the fire brigade have been called
- Only return to the building to fight the fire if it is safe to do so

In addition, please ensure that:

- You are aware of the location of all the exits
- You know the location of the fire alarm and fire appliances and how to use them
- You know where to assemble in the event of an evacuation

### **3. Fire Precautions**

Potential fire risks need not be dangerous provided that some simple but important precautions are required to be observed by all volunteers.

- Memorise the evacuation procedure, your emergency exit and assembly point in case of fire. The assembly point is on the pavement, at the junction of St Albans Road and Skircoat Green Road
- Familiarise yourself with the position of firefighting equipment and the correct method of operation of extinguishers and never interfere with or misuse the fire equipment
- Keep fire exits, routes and access to fire fighting equipment clear from any obstructions: do not wedge fire doors open
- Keep your working area free of waste as far as possible and in particular those areas which are not easily accessible, e.g. under desks, behind radiators, etc. Keep all combustible materials a safe distance from heating appliances and do not place anything on heaters
- There is to be no smoking on the premises
- If you do see anything which may be a fire hazard, correct it yourself if easy and safe to do so, or report it immediately

### **4. Code of Safe Conduct**

- Conform to the health and safety at work policy, all health and safety rules and signs, fire precautions and emergency procedure
- Ensure that you understand and follow the safe operation of your duties; ask if you do not understand any aspect of these
- Report all accidents, near misses, potential hazards and damage immediately
- Do not interfere with or misuse anything provided for the health and safety of volunteers or library users
- Do not act in a way that could endanger yourself or others; do not play practical jokes
- Do not run, especially on stairs or steps. Use handrails; never read while walking
- Keep your work area tidy and clear up obstructions; do not leave things lying around
- Clean up any spilt liquids, tracked in rain etc. immediately
- In the event of your being called upon to handle bulky or heavy object, only lift or move what you can easily manage; always bend your knees and keep your back straight- take the stress in your legs, not your back. GET ASSISTANCE if in doubt. Do not overreach; do not climb on

anything not meant for the purpose; use a ladder, ensuring that it is in good condition and securely and properly positioned.

Electrical Equipment is regularly checked and is normally safe when properly used  
BUT:

- Never touch electrical equipment with wet hands
- Always disconnect electrical equipment when moving it
- Never attempt electrical repairs unless authorised
- Always keep electrical supply cables and wires away from wet areas or from where they could be walked over, etc
- Always switch off equipment if not in use; disconnect from the mains outside normal working hours unless instructed otherwise
- Information on any specific hazards and precautions will be issued as appropriate and is available from the Volunteer Trainer. Training in dealing with hazards will be conducted as appropriate

## **5. Information and Training**

### **New Volunteers**

On joining the organisation, all volunteers will be informed of the general health and safety aspects of their employment and of any specific information appropriate to them

### **All Volunteers**

All volunteers will be informed about and trained in, health and safety matters including exposure to any identified risks. Such information and training will be given in the event of there being a change in circumstances affecting health and safety, and otherwise will be adapted and repeated periodically where appropriate.

## **6. Risk Assessment**

Regular and systematic inspections and risk assessments of all potential hazardous substances and work activities will be made by, or under the authority of, the Chair or the nominated trustee and will take into account all the relevant regulations and codes of practice. Specialist advice will be obtained if necessary and the risk assessment will be reviewed periodically. The significant findings will be recorded, and appropriate preventative and/or protective measures taken as necessary.

## **7. Alcohol and Drug Abuse**

Over indulgence in alcohol and drugs can lead to dependency and resultant health problems. It can impair an individual's performance at work, adversely affecting the efficiency of the organisation and jeopardising the safety of others.

Supervisors who identify potential sufferers are required to advise the Chair of their suspicions.

When a volunteer admits having a problem of this nature and agrees to undergo treatment for it, the organisation will regard the matter in the same way as any other illness and will support the individual's efforts to overcome the problem. Should the individual not co-operate with treatment or suffer a relapse, or if it appears that recovery is unlikely, a warning will be issued to the employee or volunteer, requiring a full recovery. If this does not materialise then dismissal is likely.

This policy in no way relieves an employee from the requirement not to consume alcohol or drugs, nor be under the influence, on the organisations premises. Failure to comply with this rule is likely to result in dismissal without notice.

## **8. Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted at The Old Library, either indoors or in the garden. Smoking constitutes a fire hazard and can be dangerous for the smoker and colleagues. E-cigarette use is similarly not permitted.

## **9. Infectious Diseases**

Volunteers who have an infectious condition will be treated in the same way as any other person except in so far as it puts the health and safety of themselves or others at risk or otherwise adversely affects their ability to perform their duties

## **10. Personal Safety**

It is the policy of The Old Library to ensure that everyone in the organisation is aware of and fulfils their responsibilities for safety from violence at work. To this end, The Old Library is committed to:

- Conducting a regular analysis within the organisation to identify risk, hazards, problems or patterns or other issues
- Introducing as necessary, preventative measures to minimise the risk of violence at work
- Making all new volunteers aware of the personal safety policy and their responsibilities within it
- Providing after care procedures such as counselling and time off work
- Providing learning opportunities to staff to ensure that they can fulfil their responsibilities under the policy and protect them at work

All volunteers must:

- Take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their acts or omission

- Use sensible measures to ensure their safety when working alone, in accordance with The Old Library's Lone Worker Policy.
- Attend training events such as those concerned with the policy
- Not endanger themselves or their colleagues. In particular, they are warned against using provocative language or gestures towards fellow employees, volunteers or members of the public
- Not put at risk his or her life or the lives of others whilst attempting to prevent an act of violence
- In an emergency ensure that the police/ emergency services are summoned
- If subjected to any violence whatsoever (including verbal abuse, threats and actual physical assault), they must complete an Accident Report form at the earliest possible opportunity and return it to the Chair.

## **11. Stress**

It is the aim of The Old Library to ensure that all volunteers are kept safe and healthy at work and are not subjected to excessive workloads, onerous working practices or a detrimental working environment which might, if unchecked, cause the employee stress. It is also the aim of The Old Library to identify and assist those volunteers who are suffering from stress for whatever reason and finding it difficult to cope by offering reasonable practical alternatives and support mechanisms.