

Health and Safety Policy

This policy includes the recommendations from the The Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers and the 8 sections recommended by the Voluntary Arts Network

Statement of Intent:

As a Guild, we will assess our venues and activities to manage, reduce or remove risks to the health and safety of our members, visitors and in any public involvement.

How will the policy be implemented?

- We recognise that all members have a duty of care to each other and to the public.
- Any young person under the age of 18 years must be accompanied by an adult responsible for their safety. The adult is responsible for checking risk assessments and guidance for any activity the young person takes part in.
- We produce risk assessments for all activities to identify, manage or reduce risks to an acceptable level. We have a template for risk assessments and can give advice and support to complete.
- We maintain safety in our workspaces and have safety guidance and information regarding safe movement in and around our venue, safe-handling of heavy materials and equipment, the safe use of equipment and hazardous substances.
- We request all workshop tutors to provide a risk assessment for the activity two months ahead of the workshop to allow us to make suitable provision for the health and safety of participants and others in the venue.
- One named person from the Guild takes responsibility for checking for any risks and hazards during an activity and for checking that risk assessments are in place.
- Any incidents are recorded and reviewed by the Committee.
- The Guild Chairperson is responsible for checking that the policy is implemented.
- The policy is reviewed and where necessary revised annually. Members are invited to give feedback at any time.

Potential Hazards and Risks across the Core Skills – weaving, spinning and dyeing.

- Slips trips and falls can be a significant risk where there are lots of equipment and people. We will keep walkways clear to reduce the risk. Fire exits will also be kept clear.
- We recognise that posture and position when carrying out craft activities is important to reduce pain and over-use injuries. All members take their own responsibility for these to reduce these risks and taking breaks if sitting for a long period of time. The Association of Guilds recommend a break after every 20 minutes of sitting.

- We will ensure that heavy equipment is lifted and handled safely to minimise risks of damage to backs and joints.

Use of Raw Fibres

We will take the following practical risk arrangements when using raw fibres to minimise the already very small risk of infection and reducing allergic reactions in susceptible people.

- Clear guidance on handling raw fibres will be made available at Guild activities.
- Hand disinfectant will be made available in addition to hand-washing facilities. One named person will be responsible for safely cleaning and disinfecting any hand basins used. If fibres have been scoured as part of the activity, any sink and utensils used will be cleaned and disinfected.
- When handling animal fibres, we recommend the following simple precautions to reduce any risks:
 - *Check hands and arms for any cuts before handling, using plasters or gloves where needed to cover any wound*
 - *If fibres are dusty (sometimes alpacas fleece can be as they like dust baths), use a dust mask*
 - *Examine fibres in well-ventilated rooms or outside*
 - *Wash hands straight away after handling fibre or use hand-gel*
 - *Effectively scouring fibres before spinning is recommended – the Association of Guilds, does not consider that hand hot water is sufficient for sheep fleece (there is a reference, which we have not yet been able to access). Those members using fleece which has been prepared with cold or hand-hot water to be mindful of those who might be pregnant or whose immune systems might be compromised. High alcohol content hand gel is recommended before touching communal surfaces and door handles etc.*
 - *Working with raw fibre is not recommended for pregnant women, those undergoing health treatments that compromise the immune system and anyone feeling unwell. Those with chronic respiratory conditions may need to take extra precautions.*
 - *Food and drink preparation needs to be completely separate from areas where raw fibre is present*

Use of Spinning wheels and other equipment with moving parts

- There is a low risk of hair, fingers or clothing getting caught in a moving part causing minor injuries. However, general common sense and care by users will prevent this.

Use of Dyestuffs and Other Chemicals

- Heating liquids for scouring and dyeing can present risks from the safety of the equipment used as well as the potential for scalding from splashes or spills from containers. All involved will take responsibility for their safety and the safety of others. Pans and equipment will be sited in safe areas and care will be used when moving hot liquids or equipment.
- Many dyes and mordants are sold as crystals or as very fine powders. The dust and crystals can cause irritations to skin and may be dangerous to inhale. These will be used with care; participants will be made aware of the risks and face-masks will be made available. Gloves and protective clothing will be recommended. Anyone with cuts or open wounds will be asked to cover these.
- All stages of the dyeing process will be in well-ventilated areas.

- We will only use the least amount of dyestuffs and mordants needed for the project to be successful. The safety of all mordants and dyestuffs will be checked from supplier information or specialist books/websites.
- Utensils will be dedicated for dyeing and never used for food stuffs.
- Food and drink will not be prepared or consumed in the same area being used for dyeing and processing.
- We will dispose of any remaining dyes, mordant liquid and dyebaths safely, diluting as necessary. We will follow advice from established sources and if uncertain from the local environmental authority on safe disposal. We will use a sealed container, clearly labelled, if we wish to keep any dyes or mordants for later use. Dyed materials will be hung to dry where they will not cause a slip hazard.

Reviewed: 05.11.23

Signed: *Judy Throup*

Judy Throup - Chair Devon Guild

Next review due: November 2024.