



HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

September 2025

The Bearcat Running Club Health and Safety Policy consist of a general policy statement and supplementary sections that provide extra important details.

The general policy statement draws heavily on the England Athletics Template Health and Safety Policy (August 2024)¹. Other sections have been benchmarked against the policies of other running clubs.

Section 1 General Policy Statement

The Bearcat Running Club aims to promote the health, safety and welfare of all persons to whom we owe a duty of care, most particularly Club Members, guests and visitors taking part in and supporting our club training sessions, through a commitment to the development of a positive health and safety culture.

To achieve the highest possible standards, the Bearcat Running Club aims to, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- comply with all relevant health and safety legislation and guidelines
- conduct risk assessments, ensuring actions arising are implemented and the risks are reduced to the lowest practicable level
- provide defined procedures, which include safe methods of working for all those involved in the delivery of club activity
- seek to prevent accidents, incidents, near misses and cases of work-related ill health

¹ The England Athletics template policy can be accessed from www.englandathletics.org/clubhub/resource/health-and-safety/



- report any accidents, incidents, near misses and cases of ill health arising from club activity and ensure the timely completion of investigations to prevent incident reoccurrence
- implement emergency and first aid procedures;
- ensure mechanisms are in place to report hazards and identify and rectify faults;
- ensure suitable welfare arrangements are in place and provide a safe and healthy working environment for all those involved in club activity, and;
- provide appropriate information, instruction and supervision to ensure all those involved in club activity take care of their own safety and welfare and that of others.

The Bearcat Running Club is committed to the development of individuals involved in the delivery of club activity and aims to:

- establish an effective process that identifies how the health and safety responsibilities are allocated and communicated across the Club;
- communicate matters affecting health and safety, including day-to-day health and safety conditions, and;
- provide appropriate information and support to ensure all those with a responsibility for health and safety are competent in their role.

The Club Committee is responsible for the implementation and management of the health and safety arrangements that exist within the Bearcat Running Club and accepts this responsibility. The Committee will review this policy statement at least annually and any revisions will be made accessible to members.

Signed:

Date:

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Club Chair



Section 2 Contextual considerations

The following sets out important contextual factors taken into consideration in the development of the Club's Health and Safety Policy and practices. If these contextual factors change and/or additional significant contextual factors become relevant, a review of policy and practice will be undertaken.

- The Bearcat Running Club offers various group outdoor running activities for members and club visitors throughout the year.
- Club membership is open to those age 18 and above. Members are allowed to bring with them children/young people (age 12 up to age 18) as guest attendees. Members doing this must supervise those guests or agree with another Member to supervise those guests in the activity being undertaken.
- Our schedule is based mainly on Sunday morning sessions on a weekly basis and twice monthly evening sessions.
- The meeting and finish point for most Club activities is the Turks Head Pub. Approximately 10-15 times per year, the Club has sessions that start and finish at other locations within the borough of Richmond upon Thames². While aiming to use off road paths as much as possible (e.g. within parks or riverside), inevitably running routes almost always include sections that are on roadside paths.
- Participant fitness and athletic ability is diverse, ranging from approximately 3 mph (walkers) to 7+ mph. The range of abilities is accommodated by having multiple groups, each geared towards a particular ability level. Each group is allocated a leader who at the very least is suited to taking part in the ability group they are leading, has a good understanding of the Club's aims and values and is knowledgeable in the role of the run leader in ensuring health and safety during club

² Most recently these being Orleans Gardens (adjacent to the café), Kneller Gardens (adjacent to the café) and the Sir Mo Farah Athletics Track (St Mary's University)



activities. In addition, the Club ensures that the majority of regular leaders have the England Athletics Leadership in Running Fitness qualification.

- In addition to normal sessions, the Club also organises activities such as participation in events by representative teams (e.g. Green Belt Relay) or organised outings for club members.

Section 3 Responsibilities

Responsibilities for health and safety are shared between the Club Committee, run leaders during club activities and every participant in club activities.

Responsibilities of the Committee

The Club Committee has an overall duty of care responsibility for club activities and seeks to ensure our health and safety arrangements are fit for purpose. In exercising this responsibility, the Committee will:

- Regularly review this Health and Safety Policy and associated practices.
- Undertake regular, recorded risk assessments on key activities undertaken by the club, and publish both assessments and safety guidance on the club website.
- Create a safe environment by putting safety measures in place - identified by risk assessments.
- Ensure appropriate guidance on running safely is shared with participants.
- Ensure the Club maintains a core team of run leaders who are current holders of Leading in Running Fitness certification supplemented by a team of support run leaders who have been inducted to the leader role through prior shadowing of a core leader and/or other means.



- Equip run leaders with basic First Aid materials.
- Periodically consider health and safety matters in meetings with run leaders with a view to embedding existing good practice and identifying further improvements.
- Maintain a system for the reporting (and related record keeping) of incidents or accidents sustained during any club activity and review any reported matters at subsequent Committee meetings in order to identify and implement any appropriate follow-up actions.
- Ensure an insurance policy is in place that provides liability insurance for club activities.

Responsibilities of Run Leaders

Run leaders will:

- Maintain a good understanding of the Club's policy and guidelines on health and safety.
- Act as role models in following the club guidelines and promoting good health and safety practice.
- When leading a group, carry basic first aid supplied by the Club and ensure that within the group at least one person has a mobile phone with them along with contact details of the Club Committee members.
- Report to the Club Committee any incidents or accidents occurring during an activity they are leading, using the Club's reporting protocol.
- Regularly take part in run leader meetings arranged by the Committee and, where this is not possible, read any notes issued as a follow up to the meeting.



Responsibilities of all participants

Every participant is responsible for their own personal health and safety and supporting the health and safety of others. Participants will:

- Either on the Club's online membership form or on an interim form completed at the beginning of a session, provide details of (i) any health condition or other relevant factor where this is necessary to best ensure their health and safety and (ii) details of those they would want to be contacted in the case of an emergency. In completing either online form or interim form, the participant will confirm acceptance of responsibility for their own personal health and safety.
- Prior to the commencement of any activity, self-assess their fitness and be satisfied they are fit enough to take part in their chosen group.
- Be correctly equipped (e.g. wearing suitable footwear and clothing).
- Conduct themselves in a manner to prevent harm to others in the running group or to members of the public.
- Adhere to basic H&S principles when running and follow safety advice from the Run Leader or, where relevant, event officials.

Section 5 Running Safety Guidelines

General

- Where different paced run groups are offered, choose the group best suited to your ability or preferred pace.
- Keep within sight of your group and alert your Run Leader (or another runner) if you feel at risk of getting left behind. Faster runners will muster (loop back) at regular



intervals or when requested to by the Run Leader. [Leaders should periodically check that all in the group are in sight and instruct front runners to loop back as necessary].

- If you need to leave the run for whatever reason, notify the Run Leader. If you cannot reach or interrupt the leader, ask a member of your group to notify them for you.
- When running in low light or poor visibility wear hi-viz, reflective clothing. If notified in advance that it is necessary due to a particular route having no artificial lighting, wear a running torch so you can be easily seen by drivers and others. If using a running torch, avoid dazzling fellow runners.
- Keep the Membership Secretary updated of any change to your ICE contacts and consider carrying with you emergency contact details.
- Do not wear in-ear headphones on Club runs.
- Warn other runners around you of impending hazards such as approaching bikes, slippery surfaces, damaged pavements, potholes, low-hanging branches, brambles, or other obstacles. Observe calls to stay to one side of the path and/or single file.
- Look out for the other runners within your training group, if someone is struggling make sure that they are not left on their own and/or alert the Run Leader.

Medical Conditions

- Do not run if you are feeling unwell or displaying symptoms of any transmittable illness (e.g. Covid).
- Where relevant, runners with pre-existing medical conditions are strongly advised to carry accessible relevant health information with their ICE data.



- If you are concerned that illness, injury or any medical condition may impact your ability to complete a session, please let your Run Leader know what adaptation may help you.

Road Safety

- You are responsible for your safety so approach roads/junctions with caution and do not blindly follow other runners across. Always check first!
- Give way to other pedestrians/path users when necessary.
- When running along roads without footpaths:
 - Keep right to face any oncoming traffic (move to the left if forward visibility is limited due to a bend in the road).
 - Be prepared to run in single file and keep close to the side of the road.

Reporting Accidents or Incidents³

- Members are encouraged to alert Run Leaders to accidents or incidents that the leader would otherwise not be aware of - especially if the hazard can be reduced and/or communicated to others.
- Run Leaders will report accidents or incidents to the Committee Member overseeing the day's activities or, if this is not possible, the Club Secretary by emailing details to office@bearcatrunningclub.co.uk using the Club's reporting form (for reference, the form is shown at the end of this policy and copies can be downloaded from the Club website).
- Should a welfare matter arise please report this to the Club Secretary by emailing office@bearcatrunningclub.co.uk

³ Accident is defined by HSE as an event that results in injury or ill health. In this policy we extend this definition to include unintended damage to property. Incident is a near miss or dangerous occurrence ('lucky escape') – it has/had the potential to result in injury or damage



INCIDENT REPORT FORM

An incident report form should be completed by the Responsible Person as soon as possible after the occurrence of a relevant incident. For an incident occurring during a club session run, the run leader of the group that experienced the incident is the Responsible Person and, if possible, the form should be completed immediately at the end of the run (i.e. back at the start/finish point of the run, usually the Turks Head). On completion, the form should be passed to a Committee member.

If unable to complete at the end of the club session, the form should be completed electronically and emailed to office@bearcatrunningclub.co.uk.

The receiving Committee Member will liaise with the Club Secretary in order for the details on the form to be recorded on an incident log and for any immediate follow up actions to be identified.

As well as any immediate follow up actions that may be determined, at every Committee meeting consideration will be given to any reported incidents that have occurred since the last meeting and further follow up actions may be identified.

Please Note: The Bearcat Running Club insurance policy provides public liability cover. It protects the club, its officers, coaches, leaders, voluntary workers in connection with any Bearcat Running Club permitted event or other club activity.

It does not provide accident, medical or property insurance (storm damage, fire, theft, loss etc) except in circumstances where these give rise to a claim for negligence or other liability.



1. GENERAL DETAILS

Name of Responsible Person:

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Is the Responsible Person a Club member? YES / NO

If NO, please provide contact details:

Event/Activity [eg. Club session, novice 2 group]:

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Location of incident:

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Date

Approx Time of Incident

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Outline details of the incident

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If the incident involved anyone sustaining an injury, please complete section 2.

If the incident involved any property damage/loss, please complete section 3.

Details of witnesses to be added in section 4.

Add other details in section 5 and complete the declaration in section 6.

2. PERSONAL INJURY

Name of Injured Person(s):

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Is the Injured Person(s) a Club member? YES / NO

If NO, please provide contact details:

Nature of Injury

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Treatment Given

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Was the injured person taken to hospital?

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Hospital Name and Location

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Further Information

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3. PROPERTY DAMAGE/LOSS

Details of Damage

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Name of Owner (if known)

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Is the Owner a Club member? YES / NO

If NO, provide contact details:

Further Information

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4. WITNESSES or PEOPLE REPORTING INJURY or DAMAGE/LOSS

Name

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Add contact details if they are not a Club member

Name

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Add contact details if they are not a Club member

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5. OTHER INFORMATION

Has the incident been reported to the police?

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Details of Officer/Station

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Please outline any implied or actual threat of legal action

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Who in your view is responsible for the incident?

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Any Additional Information including any recommendations for consideration of the Club Committee

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6. FORM SIGN-OFF

A) To be completed by the Responsible Official [if the incident occurred during a club session, this would normally be the run leader of the group that experienced the incident]

The above information is correct and complete, to the best of my knowledge.

Name (please print)

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Signed

Date

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If not a Club member, please provide contact details

B) To be completed by the receiving Committee Member

I confirm receipt of the completed incident form.

Name (please print)

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Signed

Date

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