

## 8. Health and Safety

Teachers should ensure that pupils recognise hazards, assess risks and take steps to control risks to themselves and others. For example pupils should be taught about hazards, risks and risk control during activities using cutting equipment. Teachers will need to judge if and when it is appropriate to demonstrate activities such as cutting vegetables or handling plant species. Teachers should also ensure that children respect the environment in which they are working and the living plant specimens around them.

### 8.1 Health and Safety guidelines for schools visiting a botanic garden

Teachers should ensure that they have read the appropriate organisational guidelines e.g. Kew's school Health & Safety guidelines and 'Making the most of your visit' (<http://www.kew.org/education>). All project deliverers will have risk assessed activities and will endeavour to minimise any risk however teachers should note the especially important points below.

**Awareness of children's allergies.** Ensure that the botanic garden educator is advised of these and that relevant medication is available.

**On hot days assume that the children will get hot.** Ensure that sun block lotion is available or has been applied ahead of entry and that sun hats and shoulder coverings are available for each child. However you should also ensure that children wear sturdy footwear (i.e. not open sandals) as they may be walking in long grass / or on rough terrain on occasions. It can get very hot and humid inside tropical glasshouses, even on a short stay inside. Please ensure that children have adequate water available (plastic water bottles).

**The guidelines for each organisation for the ratio of children to teacher / helpers should be strictly followed.**

**If wet** please ensure children wear appropriate clothing and footwear as the ground may be slippery. Outdoor work will go ahead *even in the rain*.

**Please advise children not to touch plants** unless advised to do so by staff and when they do work with plant specimens, they should be advised to wash their hands afterwards or be supplied with wet wipes.

**Supervise children closely if cutting needs to be done during activities.** We encourage you to let children do their own cutting and investigation as long as they are well supervised and risk assessed. This greatly enhances children's desire to carry out experiments and scientific activities.

**Bees, wasps and other insect life** will be in and around flowers in summer. Observations should be done carefully, checking for insect life before handling plant material.

### 8.2 Health and Safety activities whilst on guided walks / activities outside in the countryside

All of the above will apply. Teachers will need to ensure that they are fully aware of local / national Health and Safety guidelines and emergency action plans for 'off-site' study trips. The following points should be particularly noted:

- There is likely to be additional trip hazards and an abundance of wild plants such as stinging nettles and brambles; children should be warned to be alert to their presence
- Children will need to carry extra water and food
- Children must wear clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather conditions
- Children will not be in a 'secure' place, and therefore should be more closely monitored to ensure that no-one wanders off or is lost in woodlands
- There are likely to be water hazards e.g. ponds, streams, rivers and lakes and appropriate H&S guidelines should be addressed to minimise any hazards.
- Teachers should carry a mobile phone to ensure rapid access to nearby emergency services in case of an emergency