Goat Walking Policy

(UK-Based Animal Experience Provision)

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the procedures and safety protocols for delivering alpaca walking experiences to ensure the welfare of the animals and the safety and enjoyment of all participants. It applies to all guided walks involving goats, including public experiences, educational groups, and therapeutic sessions.

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2. Legal Framework and Compliance

This policy is guided by the following UK legislation and best practice standards:

- **Animal Welfare Act 2006**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **Welfare of Animals (Transport) (England) Order 2006**
- DEFRA's **Codes of Practice for the Welfare of Livestock**

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3. Route Planning and Risk Management

All goat walking routes must be:

- **Planned and regularly inspected** to ensure they are:
    - Free from high traffic
    - Well-maintained and non-slip
    - Free from harmful or toxic plants
    - Low in noise and sudden activity
- Routes must be:
    - **Clearly marked** and suitable for the number of participants
    - Designed with **looped or return access**, avoiding sudden slopes or terrain that may cause strain
- **Pre-walk safety checks** are performed daily, including weather conditions
- A **risk assessment** is conducted for each route and reviewed **quarterly** or after any incident

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4. Activity Guidelines for Participants

General Conduct

- All walks must be **supervised by trained staff** with knowledge of goat behaviour and welfare
- Participants must be **briefed before each walk** on:
    - Goat body language
    - Safe distances
    - Respectful interaction
- Children under 8 must be accompanied by a responsible adult and may only walk an goat **alongside an adult handler**

Use of Leads and Halters

- Goats must be:
    - Fitted with a properly sized **collar and lead rope**
    - Gently led—**never pulled, forced, or chased**
- Participants are shown how to:
    - Safely hold a lead
    - Walk beside, not ahead of, the goat
    - Avoid sudden movements or loud noises

Feeding and Interaction

- Feeding during walks is only permitted under **staff supervision**, using approved treats
- Physical contact is encouraged only if goatd are comfortable—**no hugging or climbing on animals**

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5. Participant Safety and Medical Needs

- A **first aid kit** and mobile phone are carried by staff at all times
- Participant medical and allergy information must be declared prior to the walk
- Participants with mobility issues must be offered an **alternative adapted experience**, where possible
- Walks may be cancelled or adapted due to:

- **Extreme weather**
- **Goat health**
- Safety concerns on the route

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6. Goat Welfare

- All goats must be:
  - Monitored daily for signs of stress, lameness, or illness
  - Given regular breaks and access to water before and after walks
- Alpacas are not to be overworked; a **rotational schedule** must be in place to ensure adequate rest
- Handlers are trained in **animal behaviour**, **low-stress handling**, and **emergency procedures**

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7. Incident Reporting

Any of the following must be reported and recorded immediately:

- Injuries (to participant, staff, or animal)
- Near misses or route hazards
- Animal distress or behaviour concerns

Incidents are logged in the **goat Walks Incident Log** and reviewed monthly by the farm or service manager.

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8. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed **annually**, or sooner if:

- Legislation changes
- An incident indicates a gap in policy
- Feedback from participants or staff highlights necessary improvements

Policy Owner: Keeley Reading
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Next Review Date: 10th June 2027