SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Protecting children. Recognising concerns.
Acting without delay.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework
and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to safeguarding and child protection and establishes the principles, responsibilities and arrangements through which the school protects children from harm, identifies concerns at the earliest opportunity and ensures that appropriate action is taken when a child may need help or protection. It reflects the school's statutory responsibilities and should be read alongside current safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and the related policies and procedures identified within this document.

At Riverside Bridge School, we believe that every pupil has the right to feel safe, be protected from harm and have their voice heard and understood. Safeguarding is fundamental to every aspect of school life and underpins the relationships, systems and professional practice through which we support pupils to learn, develop and thrive. Our safeguarding approach has been carefully developed to reflect the diverse and often complex needs of our pupils. As a specialist school for pupils with SEND, we recognise that communication differences, cognitive and sensory needs, medical complexity, intimate care requirements and varying levels of dependence on adults can increase vulnerability and may make abuse, neglect or exploitation more difficult to recognise or disclose. Safeguarding practice therefore requires professional curiosity, detailed knowledge of the individual pupil and careful attention to changes in communication, behaviour, presentation and wellbeing.

Rather than viewing safeguarding as a separate process, Riverside Bridge School embeds it throughout the culture and everyday life of the school. Through clear procedures, strong professional relationships, accessible communication, effective supervision, staff training and timely action, we aim to create an environment in which pupils feel secure, adults remain vigilant and concerns are identified and responded to at the earliest opportunity.

Communication is central to our safeguarding practice. We recognise that pupils may communicate distress, discomfort, refusal or concern in many different ways, including through speech, signing, AAC, gesture, behaviour, changes in regulation or other personalised forms of communication. Staff are expected to understand how individual pupils communicate and must never assume that an absence of spoken language means an absence of voice or concern.

Our safeguarding responsibility also extends beyond responding to disclosures or known incidents. Through early identification, Family Help, attendance monitoring, online safety, personal safety education, medical and intimate care oversight, positive relationships and effective multi-agency working, we seek to reduce risk, strengthen protective factors and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support before concerns escalate.

Safeguarding arrangements are continually reviewed and developed to reflect current legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements and the changing needs of our pupils. They remain firmly rooted in Riverside Bridge School's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, protected and supported to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Our responsibility to pupils, families and the school community

Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of every pupil and to ensure that all adults understand and fulfil the safeguarding responsibilities relevant to their role.

In delivering our safeguarding responsibilities, we will:

- provide a safe, inclusive and vigilant environment in which pupils are listened to, respected and protected;
- maintain a culture in which safeguarding is recognised as everyone's responsibility;
- ensure staff understand how pupils with SEND may communicate distress, harm or unmet need and maintain professional curiosity at all times;
- provide clear procedures for recognising, recording, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns;
- ensure urgent concerns are escalated immediately and referrals are made without delay where required;
- work in partnership with parents and carers wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so, while ensuring that the welfare of the child remains paramount;
- work effectively with Children's Social Care, health services, the police, Local Authorities and other safeguarding partners;
- ensure safeguarding is embedded across curriculum, attendance, online safety, medical care, intimate care, behaviour, relationships and wider school life;
- provide regular safeguarding training and updates so that staff remain confident, informed and accountable;
- maintain effective safer recruitment, allegations management, whistleblowing and low-level concerns arrangements;
- regularly review safeguarding practice, systems and emerging patterns of concern to strengthen prevention and improve outcomes for pupils.

Through these commitments, we aim to ensure that every pupil at Riverside Bridge School is protected from harm, receives help when it is needed and is supported to feel safe, communicate concerns, develop trusting relationships and participate fully in school life.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK	02	PRINCIPLES
03	AIMS	04	SAFEGUARDING APPROACH
05	SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE STAFF	06	SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE
07	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	08	CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING
09	CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES	10	MAKING A REFERRAL
11	FAMILY HELP, STATUTORY SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING PLANS	12	ONE CHANCE RULE
13	CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION	14	ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS
15	WHISTLEBLOWING	16	RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
	APPENDICES		

APPROVED BY: Governing Board

APPROVED ON: September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON: September 2027

KEY SAFEGUARDING PERSONNEL

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Headteacher	Mr L Carvalho	leca@riversidebridge.com	0203 946 5809
Deputy DSL	Mrs K Kojnozi	kako@riversidebridge.com	0203 946 5809
Deputy DSL	Miss E Ayaz	elay@riversidebridge.com	0203 946 5809
Deputy DSL	Miss B Fenton	brfe@riversidebridge.com	0203 946 5809
Deputy DSL	Mrs G Wiseman	gewi@riversidebridge.com	0203 946 5809
Attendance Officer	Mrs S Akram	attendance@riversidebridge.com	
Headteacher / Deputy DSL	Ms L Amri	leam@riversidebridge.com	0203 946 5809
Senior Deputy Headteacher / Deputy DSL	Mrs H Clark	hecl@riversidebridge.com	0203 946 5809
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Mr H Farrington	Hermann.farrington@thebridgetrust.academy	N/A
Chair of Governors	Mr H Farrington	Hermann.farrington@thebridgetrust.academy	N/A
LADO (LBBD)	Mr M Cullern	mike.cullern@lbbd.gov.uk	0203 227 3934
Social Care Duty Team		LSCD@LBBD.gov.uk	0203 227 3811

All safeguarding concerns about a pupil must be reported to the DSL or a Deputy DSL without delay. Concerns about the conduct of an adult must be reported in accordance with the school's Managing Allegations Policy. Where there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

Local authority contacts

As Riverside Bridge School educates pupils from several Local Authorities, referrals should always be made to the Local Authority where the child normally resides.

Service	Contact
LBBD MASH Team	**Phone**: 020 8227 3811 (Monday to Friday) 020 8215 3000 (out of hours) **Email:** IntakeTeam@lbbd.gov.uk

Service	Contact
Havering MASH Team	**Phone**: 01708 433222 (Monday to Friday 01708 433999 (out of hours) **Email:** tmash@havering.gov.uk
Redbridge MASH Team	**Phone**: 020 8708 3885 (Monday to Friday 020 8708 5897 (out of hours) **Email:** cpat.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk
Newham MASH Team	**Phone**: 0203 373 4600 (Monday to Friday) 0208 430 2000 (out of hours) **Email:** mash@newham.gov.uk
Essex MASH Team	**Phone**: **0345 603 7627** (Monday to Friday) 0345 606 1212 (out of hours) **email:** org.safeguards@essex.gov.uk
LADO	**Phone**: **0208 227 3934 or 07875 993 857** **Email:** LADO@lbbd.gov.uk

Emergency contacts

Service	Contact
Emergency Services	999
Police (non-emergency)	101
NHS	111

National safeguarding contacts

Organisation	Contact
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285
Childline	0800 1111
CEOP	www.ceop.police.uk
UK Safer Internet Centre	www.saferinternet.org.uk
Internet Watch Foundation	www.iwf.org.uk
Report Remove (Childline)	www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/report-remove/

Section 01

SAFEGUARDING DEFINITION AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Defining safeguarding. Understanding responsibility.

Safeguarding definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- providing help and support to meet children's needs as soon as problems emerge;
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether within or outside the home, including online;
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care;
- promoting children's upbringing within their family or family network where this is in their best interests;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best possible outcomes.

Safeguarding at Riverside Bridge School includes creating a culture where pupils feel safe, are listened to and have their communication needs understood. It extends beyond responding to abuse and includes proactive work to promote pupils' welfare, emotional wellbeing, attendance, online safety, physical health, positive relationships and readiness to learn.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, and other relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.
In particular, it has regard to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026)
- What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)
- Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and local safeguarding arrangements.

The Governing Board and Riverside Bridge School are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children. In accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the school works proactively with children's social care, health services, the police, the local authority and other relevant agencies to identify children who may be at risk, provide early intervention where appropriate, and ensure that effective action is taken to protect children from harm.

Section 02

PRINCIPLES

Prioritising welfare. Listening to children. Acting on concerns.

The welfare of the child is paramount and will always be the school's primary consideration when making safeguarding decisions.

All children, regardless of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, culture, language or background, have an equal right to protection from harm, abuse and neglect, and to receive safeguarding support appropriate to their individual needs.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every adult working at Riverside Bridge School, including governors, trustees, permanent staff, agency staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors, has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and must act immediately on any concern that a child may be at risk of harm.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment in which pupils are valued, respected and supported to thrive. We recognise that safeguarding is fundamental to pupils' wellbeing, learning and development, and underpins all aspects of school life.

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers wherever possible. However, the safety and welfare of the child will always take precedence, and concerns will be shared with appropriate agencies where this is necessary to protect a child.

Pupils and staff involved in safeguarding or child protection matters will receive appropriate support throughout any safeguarding process.

Section 03

AIMS

Protecting children. Strengthening practice. Promoting wellbeing.

The aims of this policy are to:

- demonstrate Riverside Bridge School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every pupil;
- provide a safe, caring and inclusive environment in which pupils feel secure, valued, respected and listened to;
- support pupils' physical, emotional, social and educational development by promoting their safety, wellbeing and resilience;
- ensure that all staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and agency staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to identify, respond to and report concerns promptly;
- provide clear procedures for recognising, recording, reporting and responding to safeguarding concerns and allegations in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements;
- promote a culture of vigilance in which safeguarding concerns are identified early, information is shared appropriately and effective action is taken to protect children from harm;
- ensure that children who are at risk of harm receive timely support through effective multi-agency working, including early help, children's social care, health services, the police and other relevant agencies;
- work in partnership with parents, carers and external professionals to safeguard children while ensuring that the welfare of the child remains paramount;
- ensure that robust safer recruitment procedures are followed and that all required pre-employment checks, including maintenance of the single central record (SCR), are completed in accordance with statutory requirements;
- promote a safeguarding culture in which pupils, families and staff are supported appropriately throughout safeguarding and child protection processes.

Section 04

SAFEGUARDING APPROACH

Supporting children. Preventing harm. Strengthening protection.

4.1. Supporting children

Riverside Bridge School recognises that children who have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation, trauma or adverse childhood experiences may face significant barriers to their emotional wellbeing, development and learning. Many may experience anxiety, low self-esteem, difficulties in forming relationships or communicating their experiences, while others may present through behaviours that reflect unmet need rather than deliberate choice.

As a specialist SEND school, we recognise that many of our pupils have additional vulnerabilities arising from communication differences, learning disabilities, autism, sensory needs, medical complexity and dependence on adults for their care. These factors may make it more difficult for abuse or neglect to be recognised or disclosed. Staff therefore maintain a high level of professional curiosity and remain vigilant to changes in presentation, behaviour, wellbeing or communication.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to providing a nurturing, predictable and supportive environment where every pupil feels safe, respected and valued. Through positive relationships and a trauma-informed approach, we aim to help pupils develop confidence, resilience, independence and a sense of belonging.

The school supports pupils by:

- promoting positive relationships, emotional wellbeing and self-esteem through all aspects of school life;
- delivering a curriculum that develops personal safety, communication, emotional regulation and independence, including PSHE, Relationships Education and online safety;
- providing early support and timely intervention where concerns are identified;
- working collaboratively with parents, carers and external professionals to meet pupils' individual needs;
- ensuring safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly and appropriate referrals are made where necessary.

4.2. Prevention and protection

Safeguarding is embedded throughout the life of Riverside Bridge School and is promoted through a whole-school culture of vigilance, openness and shared responsibility.

The school is committed to preventing harm by ensuring that pupils are taught, supported and protected in ways that are appropriate to their age, level of understanding and communication needs.

To achieve this, the school will:

- maintain an environment where pupils feel safe, listened to and able to communicate concerns using their preferred method of communication;
- ensure that safeguarding themes, including online safety, healthy relationships, consent, bullying and personal safety, are embedded across the curriculum;
- promote strong and trusted relationships between pupils and adults;
- ensure all staff receive regular safeguarding training and understand their individual responsibilities;
- work proactively with partner agencies to identify risk, provide early help and safeguard children effectively;
- promote the safe and responsible use of technology in accordance with the school's online safety expectations and acceptable use procedures.

Section 05

SAFE SCHOOL, SAFE STAFF

Building vigilance. Strengthening practice. Keeping everyone safe.

5.1. Safeguarding culture, training and awareness

Riverside Bridge School is committed to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture in which safeguarding is embedded throughout daily practice, professional decision-making and school life. The school will ensure that:

- all staff, including agency staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors working regularly within the school, receive appropriate safeguarding information during induction, including the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Behaviour Policy, the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs), and Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- safeguarding and child protection training is provided during induction and updated regularly in accordance with statutory guidance, with additional safeguarding updates provided throughout the year to reflect changes in legislation, local safeguarding issues and emerging risks;
- all staff receive regular training in online safety, recognising safeguarding concerns, responding to disclosures, recording concerns and understanding their individual safeguarding responsibilities;
- governors receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and maintain an up-to-date understanding of safeguarding legislation and governance responsibilities;
- the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is published on the school website and made available to parents, carers and other stakeholders on request;
- the names and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are prominently displayed throughout the school and are known by staff, pupils and visitors;
- all staff confirm that they have read and understood the safeguarding documentation provided to them, with records maintained by the school as evidence of compliance;
- safeguarding practice is subject to ongoing monitoring, quality assurance and review to ensure statutory requirements are met and that safeguarding arrangements remain effective.

5.2 Medication, intimate care and safeguarding oversight

Riverside Bridge School recognises that the administration of medication, provision of first aid, and completion of daily and intimate care tasks form a critical component of safeguarding for pupils with complex medical, physical, sensory, and communication needs.

Many pupils are unable to verbalise pain, discomfort, or concerns; therefore, accurate recording, oversight, and escalation of care and medical information is essential to protecting their welfare.

Staff are therefore expected to maintain a high level of professional curiosity, recognising that changes in behaviour, presentation, physical condition or engagement during care routines may indicate an underlying safeguarding concern.

Medication is administered in accordance with the Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy and first aid is provided in line with the First Aid Policy.

Medication is administered only by trained and authorised staff. Any refusal, delay, omission, or error in medication administration is recorded and escalated in line with school procedures.

Daily care logs, medication records, first aid records, and intimate care records are not standalone documents. Staff are required to consider these collectively as part of the school's safeguarding duty.

Patterns such as repeated injuries, frequent use of PRN medication, distress during care, changes in presentation, or medical-related non-attendance must be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and recorded on the school's safeguarding system.

Oversight of medication, first aid and intimate care arrangements is maintained by senior leaders through regular audit and review, ensuring that care and safeguarding operate as a single, joined-up system.

5.3 Use of restrictive physical intervention and safeguarding

Riverside Bridge School recognises that the use of restrictive physical intervention, restraint or seclusion may constitute a safeguarding issue where practice is inappropriate, disproportionate, repeated, or results in injury or distress.

All significant incidents involving the use of force are recorded and reported in line with the Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy and statutory guidance. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will review patterns or concerns arising from restrictive intervention records and will take appropriate safeguarding action where required.

The school analyses restrictive physical intervention records alongside safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, medical and wellbeing information to identify emerging patterns, reduce restrictive practice and ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and intervention.

Section 06

SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

Understanding duties. Applying statutory guidance.

Education Act 2002 - Section 175

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a statutory duty on governing bodies, local authorities and maintained schools to make arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. These arrangements must ensure that safeguarding is embedded throughout the school's policies, procedures, culture and day-to-day practice.

Section 157 of the Education Act 2002, together with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, places equivalent safeguarding duties on academies, independent schools and alternative provision settings to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on schools to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This statutory responsibility is known as the Prevent Duty. Riverside Bridge School fulfils this duty through staff training, safeguarding procedures, curriculum provision, partnership working and appropriate referral processes where concerns arise.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) is the Government's statutory guidance describing how organisations and agencies must work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It sets out the responsibilities of schools, local authorities, health services, police and other safeguarding partners in identifying need, providing early help, sharing information appropriately and taking coordinated action where children are at risk of harm.

The guidance also establishes expectations for effective multi-agency working, child protection processes, information sharing and safeguarding leadership, all of which underpin Riverside Bridge School's safeguarding arrangements.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) is the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Education (Non-Maintained Special Schools) (England) Regulations 2011.

The guidance sets out the legal duties placed upon schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provides the framework for safeguarding practice, safer recruitment, child protection procedures, allegations management, online safety and multi-agency working.

All staff are required to read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) as part of their induction and receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the academic year. The school may also provide additional summary materials to support understanding; however, these do not replace the requirement for all staff to read Part One of KCSIE. The guidance is readily available to all staff through the school's shared drive and staff induction programme.

All staff are provided with a copy of Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education during induction. Confirmation that it has been read and understood is recorded as part of the school's safeguarding induction process. A current copy is also available on the school's shared drive.

Prevent Duty Guidance - England and Wales

The Prevent Duty Guidance supports schools in meeting their responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Riverside Bridge School recognises that protecting children from radicalisation forms part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities.

All staff complete Prevent Duty training as part of their induction and receive regular updates to ensure they remain confident in recognising vulnerability to radicalisation, responding appropriately to concerns and following the school's safeguarding procedures.

ALL staff have undertaken the **PREVENT** training, this forms part of the staff induction programme.

Teachers' Standards

The Teachers' Standards require all teachers, including headteachers, to safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the profession. Safeguarding responsibilities form an integral part of every teacher's professional role and are reinforced through statutory guidance, professional development and the school's Code of Conduct.

Childcare Act 2006

Where applicable, the school complies with the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and the associated Disqualification under the Childcare Act guidance. Staff working in relevant settings are required to declare any circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children, and appropriate checks are undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements.

Section 07

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Knowing responsibilities. Taking action. Working together.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. While specific safeguarding duties vary according to role, every adult working within Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, act in their best interests and respond promptly to any safeguarding concern.

7.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for ensuring that the school meets its statutory safeguarding responsibilities and will ensure that:

- appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and systems are in place, are compliant with current legislation and statutory guidance, are reviewed at least annually and are available to parents and carers via the school website;
- safeguarding arrangements reflect the procedures and expectations of the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- safeguarding is appropriately monitored through regular reports, quality assurance activities and governor scrutiny, ensuring that statutory duties are effectively discharged;
- a member of the Senior Leadership Team is appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) with sufficient status, authority, time, funding, training, resources and support to carry out the role effectively;
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are appointed and trained to the same standard as the DSL to ensure safeguarding arrangements remain effective at all times;
- all staff, volunteers, agency staff and contractors receive appropriate safeguarding induction and ongoing safeguarding training appropriate to their role;
- all staff read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and appropriate systems are in place to support staff in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities;
- robust safer recruitment procedures are implemented, including all statutory pre-employment checks, online searches for shortlisted candidates, maintenance of the Single Central Record (SCR) and ensuring that at least one member of each recruitment panel has completed recognised safer recruitment training;
- effective procedures are in place for managing allegations and low-level concerns relating to adults working with children, including referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where required;

- safeguarding is promoted through a broad and balanced curriculum, including personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and online safety;
- effective arrangements are in place to safeguard children who are missing education, recognising that repeated absence may indicate abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place, regularly reviewed and effectively managed to support pupils' online safety;
- all governors obtain the appropriate enhanced DBS checks in accordance with statutory guidance;
- any identified weaknesses within safeguarding arrangements are addressed without delay.

7.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring safeguarding arrangements are implemented effectively throughout the school and will ensure that:

- this policy and all safeguarding procedures are fully implemented and consistently followed by all staff;
- safeguarding is embedded within the culture, leadership and day-to-day operation of the school;
- the DSL and Deputy DSLs receive sufficient time, supervision, resources, administrative support and training to fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively;
- pupils' wishes, feelings and lived experiences are considered whenever safeguarding decisions are made;
- systems are in place to enable pupils to express their views using communication methods appropriate to their individual needs;
- staff feel confident to raise safeguarding concerns, challenge poor or unsafe practice and use the school's whistleblowing procedures where appropriate;
- safeguarding, online safety and personal safety are promoted throughout the curriculum;
- allegations concerning adults working within the school are managed promptly in consultation with the DSL, LADO and Human Resources where appropriate;
- referrals are made to the Disclosure and Barring Service and other relevant professional bodies where statutory thresholds are met;
- sufficient staffing, supervision and resources are maintained to support effective safeguarding practice across the school.

7.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection throughout the school. The DSL will:

- provide strategic leadership for safeguarding across the school;

- promote a culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and where children are listened to and protected;
- act as the principal source of safeguarding advice and expertise for staff, governors and external professionals;
- maintain appropriate safeguarding training and refresh knowledge in line with statutory requirements;
- make referrals to Children's Social Care, the Police, Early Help and other agencies as appropriate using local authority procedures;
- maintain accurate, confidential and secure safeguarding records using the school's safeguarding recording system;
- ensure safeguarding records are retained, transferred and stored securely in accordance with statutory guidance;
- attend, or ensure appropriate representation at, child protection conferences, core groups, strategy meetings, Child in Need meetings and other multi-agency safeguarding meetings;
- ensure pupils subject to Child Protection Plans who are absent without explanation are reported promptly to the relevant social worker;
- oversee safeguarding induction and ongoing safeguarding training for all staff;
- support staff in recognising safeguarding concerns, including those relating to children with SEND, child-on-child abuse, exploitation, online safety and contextual safeguarding;
- oversee Early Help processes and support staff in identifying children who would benefit from early intervention;
- monitor safeguarding trends through analysis of safeguarding records, attendance, behaviour, restrictive physical intervention, medical information and welfare concerns to identify emerging risks and inform preventative action;
- oversee safeguarding quality assurance, including regular audit of safeguarding records, referrals, chronologies and child protection files;
- work collaboratively with partner agencies in accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and local safeguarding procedures;
- oversee the school's filtering and monitoring arrangements and ensure online safety systems remain effective.

7.4 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and provide operational safeguarding leadership across the school. The Deputy DSLs will:

- support the DSL in carrying out statutory safeguarding duties;
- respond promptly to safeguarding concerns and referrals;
- contribute to safeguarding supervision, quality assurance and staff support;

- undertake the full responsibilities of the DSL during any period of absence or where delegated.

7.5 Riverside Bridge School Staff

All permanent staff, including teachers, co-educators, therapists and support staff employed by the school, will:

- recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and act in the best interests of every child;
- maintain professional curiosity and remain vigilant to changes in pupils' behaviour, communication, presentation, attendance, physical condition or emotional wellbeing that may indicate abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- recognise that safeguarding concerns may present differently in pupils with SEND and adapt their practice accordingly;
- respond appropriately to disclosures and safeguarding concerns in accordance with statutory guidance and school procedures;
- record safeguarding concerns promptly and accurately using the school's safeguarding recording system;
- report any safeguarding concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL, or directly to Children's Social Care or the Police where a child is at immediate risk of significant harm;
- understand the Early Help process and contribute to assessments, meetings and intervention where appropriate;
- attend mandatory safeguarding training and complete all required safeguarding updates;
- contribute to creating a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment where pupils are supported to thrive.

7.6 Agency and temporary staff

Riverside Bridge School recognises that agency, supply and temporary staff make an important contribution to maintaining continuity of education and care. However, due to the specialist nature of the school and the complex needs of our pupils, additional safeguarding arrangements are in place to ensure all temporary staff understand and meet the school's expectations before working directly with pupils.

All agency, supply, temporary staff, contractors and volunteers are subject to the same safeguarding responsibilities as permanent employees and are expected to act at all times in accordance with this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and statutory safeguarding guidance.

In addition to the school's safeguarding induction, agency staff must comply with the requirements set out within the Agency Staffing Requirements and Compliance Agreement, which forms part of the school's safer recruitment and safeguarding arrangements.

This includes compliance with the school's expectations regarding safeguarding, professional conduct, safer working practice, training, pupil supervision, confidentiality, regulation support and reporting procedures.

Before commencing work with pupils, all agency staff are required to complete and sign the school's Agency Staff Induction and Safeguarding Declaration, confirming that they:

- have completed the required safeguarding induction and mandatory training;
- understand and will follow the school's safeguarding, behaviour, health and safety and professional conduct procedures;
- understand their responsibility to read the class information pack before working with unfamiliar pupils or classes;
- understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that all concerns must be reported immediately using the school's safeguarding procedures.

Agency staff are also issued with the school's Agency Staff Safeguarding Lanyard Card, which provides a concise summary of safeguarding expectations, reporting procedures, emergency arrangements and professional boundaries. This card must be worn at all times whilst on site and acts as an immediate reference to support safe practice throughout the working day.

Agency and temporary staff will:

- understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and act immediately on any concern, disclosure, injury or unsafe practice;
- work under the supervision and direction of permanent Riverside Bridge School staff unless otherwise authorised;
- familiarise themselves with pupil-specific safeguarding information, risk assessments, communication profiles and regulation strategies before working directly with pupils;
- follow all reasonable instructions provided by permanent staff and senior leaders;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy DSL or an appropriate member of the safeguarding team and ensure concerns are recorded in accordance with school procedures;
- maintain professional boundaries and comply fully with the school's Code of Conduct and confidentiality requirements;
- recognise the limits of their authority and not initiate restrictive physical intervention, remove pupils from learning environments, apply sanctions or make changes to pupil support plans unless authorised or where immediate action is necessary to prevent serious harm;
- use personal mobile phones only in accordance with the school's Staff Code of Conduct and never within pupil areas;

- cooperate fully with safeguarding supervision, monitoring, quality assurance processes and any investigation relating to safeguarding practice.

Failure to comply with the school's safeguarding procedures, professional standards or agency safeguarding requirements may result in immediate removal from placement, notification to the supplying agency and, where appropriate, referral to relevant external agencies.

All adults working within Riverside Bridge School, whether permanent, agency, or temporary, hold equal responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Section 08

CONFIDENTIALITY & INFORMATION SHARING

Sharing appropriately. Protecting information. Safeguarding children.

Riverside Bridge School recognises that effective safeguarding depends upon timely, appropriate and lawful information sharing. In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the school works collaboratively with other professionals and agencies in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2026), *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2026), the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Staff understand that information sharing is an essential part of safeguarding practice and that concerns must never be withheld because of uncertainty regarding data protection legislation. The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information where there is a lawful basis to do so and where failure to share information could place a child at risk of harm. Where appropriate, information will be shared with Children's Social Care, the Police, health professionals and other safeguarding partners in accordance with statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures.

All staff must be aware that they must never promise confidentiality to a child when doing so may compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. Where a child makes a disclosure, staff should explain sensitively that the information will only be shared with those people who need to know in order to help keep them safe.

The school recognises that safeguarding information is highly sensitive and confidential. Access to safeguarding records is therefore strictly limited to those members of staff who require the information in order to safeguard and support the child. Information is shared internally on a proportionate 'need to know' basis, balancing the child's right to privacy with the need to safeguard their welfare.

Where a referral to Children's Social Care is required, the school will normally discuss its intention with parents or carers before making the referral. However, this will not occur where doing so could place the child or another person at increased risk of harm, prejudice a police investigation or compromise the safety of those involved. Where there is uncertainty, advice will be sought from Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Police before parents or carers are informed.

Safeguarding records, including child protection records, chronologies, referrals and associated documentation, are maintained separately from the main pupil record and stored securely in accordance with statutory guidance. When a pupil transfers to another educational setting, the child protection file will be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file at the earliest opportunity, with confirmation of receipt obtained.

A copy of the safeguarding record will be retained securely until receipt has been confirmed by the receiving school, after which the retained copy will be securely destroyed in accordance with the school's retention schedule.

Records relating to restrictive physical intervention, medication, first aid, intimate care, attendance, behaviour and other welfare concerns are considered alongside safeguarding records to identify emerging patterns, cumulative risk or unmet need. Where appropriate, this information is reviewed through the school's safeguarding systems, including Sleuth, to support early identification, informed decision-making and timely intervention.

All safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the school's Record Retention Schedule, Data Protection Policy and statutory safeguarding guidance.

Section 09

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Recognising concerns. Responding promptly. Protecting children.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by adults known to them, by strangers (including online) or by another child or young person.
Further information relating to the four categories of abuse—physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and possible indicators that a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect is provided in Appendix A.

All staff understand that any child, regardless of age, background, disability, gender, ethnicity, religion or family circumstances, can become a victim of abuse or neglect. Staff are expected to maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" and to act in the best interests of the child at all times.
As a specialist school for children with complex SEND, Riverside Bridge School recognises that safeguarding concerns may present differently for our pupils. Communication differences, learning disabilities, autism, sensory needs, medical complexity and dependence upon adults may make abuse or neglect more difficult to recognise or disclose. Staff are therefore expected to maintain professional curiosity and remain alert to changes in behaviour, presentation, communication, physical condition, emotional wellbeing or engagement that may indicate an underlying safeguarding concern.
The school also recognises that abuse, neglect and safeguarding concerns rarely occur in isolation. Multiple safeguarding issues often overlap, and individual concerns that appear minor in isolation may contribute to a wider picture of cumulative risk. For this reason, all concerns, regardless of perceived significance, must be recorded promptly using the school's safeguarding recording system (Sleuth) to enable the safeguarding team to identify patterns, assess risk and take appropriate action.

The school recognises a wide range of specific safeguarding concerns, including those identified within Keeping Children Safe in Education, such as:

- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Children Missing from Home or Care
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), including County Lines
- Child-on-child abuse
- Bullying, including cyberbullying
- Domestic abuse

- Drugs and substance misuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Honour-based abuse
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Mental health
- Private fostering
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Sharing of nude and semi-nude images
- Trafficking and modern slavery

Staff understand that safeguarding concerns may manifest through behaviour, attendance, emotional wellbeing, relationships, online activity, self-harm, substance misuse or child-on-child abuse and will respond promptly to all concerns in accordance with this policy.

9.1 If staff are concerned about a child's welfare

Any member of staff who has concerns about a child's welfare, safety or wellbeing must act immediately. Concerns must never be ignored or assumed to be insignificant.

Where staff observe indicators of abuse or neglect, receive information from another person, identify changes in presentation or behaviour, or have any safeguarding concern, they must record the concern promptly on the school's safeguarding recording system (Sleuth). Where appropriate, staff should also speak directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL as soon as possible. Recording a concern does not replace the requirement to verbally escalate urgent concerns.

Staff should recognise that safeguarding concerns are not always accompanied by physical evidence. Changes in behaviour, communication, emotional presentation, artwork, play, attendance, physical appearance or interaction with others may indicate that a child requires help or protection.

For pupils with complex communication needs, staff should consider changes in regulation, behaviour, participation, eating, sleeping, sensory responses, personal care routines or physical presentation as potential indicators requiring further professional curiosity.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, staff should seek to understand the child's views using communication methods appropriate to their needs. However, staff must never investigate concerns or attempt to interview a child.

If concerns remain following initial observations or discussion, they must be referred immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

Where a child is considered to be at immediate risk of significant harm, any member of staff may make a referral directly to Children's Social Care or the Police. The DSL must be informed as soon as possible thereafter.

9.2 If a pupil discloses abuse

Riverside Bridge School recognises that disclosing abuse is often extremely difficult for children and young people. Many children may feel frightened, ashamed, confused, loyal to the person causing harm or unable to recognise that what has happened is abuse.

For many pupils within Riverside Bridge School, disclosures may not be verbal. Staff should recognise that communication through behaviour, AAC systems, symbols, signing, gestures, artwork, play, emotional responses or changes in routine may represent an attempt to communicate distress or abuse.

All staff receive training in responding appropriately to disclosures and safeguarding concerns.
When responding to a disclosure, staff will:

- remain calm and listen carefully;
- allow the child to communicate at their own pace using their preferred method of communication;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone;
- make it clear that they cannot promise confidentiality and will need to share the information with people who can help keep them safe;
- ask only open questions where clarification is absolutely necessary and avoid leading questions;
- avoid expressing shock, disbelief or judgement;
- avoid making assumptions or investigating the concern;
- explain what will happen next;
- report the concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL.

A written record must be completed as soon as possible following the disclosure using the school's safeguarding recording system. Records should be factual, dated, timed, signed and include the child's own words wherever possible. The DSL or Deputy DSL will review and acknowledge the concern without delay.

9.3 Notifying parents and carers

The school will normally discuss safeguarding concerns with parents or carers before making a referral to Children's Social Care.
However, parents or carers will not be informed where doing so may:

- place the child or another person at increased risk of harm;
- prejudice a police investigation;
- compromise the collection of evidence;
- increase the likelihood of a child being removed from school or concealed; or
- place a child at risk of forced marriage, honour-based abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or other forms of significant harm.

Where there is uncertainty, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek advice from Children's Social Care, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or the Police before contacting parents or carers. Further information regarding specific safeguarding issues, indicators and statutory expectations is contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education and associated statutory and local safeguarding guidance. Staff must refer any safeguarding concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay and must not investigate concerns themselves or delay reporting while seeking further information.

Section 10

MAKING A REFERRAL

Recording concerns. Assessing risk. Taking action.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that safeguarding concerns are identified, recorded, assessed and responded to promptly. All staff have a responsibility to act immediately where they have concerns about a child's welfare and must never assume that somebody else will act.

No safeguarding concern is considered too small to record. Individual low-level concerns may form part of a wider safeguarding picture and therefore all concerns must be reported promptly.

All safeguarding concerns relating to pupils, including disclosures, observations, injuries, changes in presentation or behaviour, welfare concerns, or concerns raised by parents or external professionals, must be recorded promptly using the school's safeguarding recording system, **Sleuth**. Recording concerns on Sleuth enables the safeguarding team to monitor individual incidents, identify cumulative concerns and assess patterns that may indicate increasing risk or unmet need.

Where a concern is considered urgent, staff must not rely solely on recording the concern electronically. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL must be informed immediately in person or by telephone to ensure timely safeguarding action.

Safeguarding concerns relating to pupils are recorded on Sleuth. Concerns, allegations or low-level concerns relating to the conduct of a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other adult working within the school must be managed separately in accordance with the Allegations Against Staff Policy and Low-Level Concerns Policy and recorded using the school's Pink Form procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider all available information, determine the level of risk and decide whether support can be provided through school-based intervention, Early Help, referral to Children's Social Care or another appropriate agency, using the relevant Local Authority Continuum of Need or Threshold Guidance.

Where a referral is required, this will normally be completed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, in their absence, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, all staff have a statutory responsibility to take appropriate action if they believe a child is at immediate risk of harm. Any member of staff may make a referral directly to Children's Social Care or the Police if necessary. Where this occurs, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, pupils and their parents or carers will be informed that a referral is being made. This will not occur where doing so could increase the risk of harm to the child or another person, prejudice a police investigation or compromise safeguarding enquiries.

Following any referral, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor the child's circumstances and maintain communication with relevant professionals.

If the child's situation does not improve or the response from external agencies is considered insufficient, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will challenge decisions appropriately, escalate concerns where necessary and continue to advocate for the child until appropriate action has been taken.

Where a child is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm, staff must contact Children's Social Care and/or the Police without delay. Immediate action must never be delayed while seeking further advice or awaiting completion of written records. Further information regarding Early Help, safeguarding thresholds and multi-agency working can be found within the school's Early Help Policy (where applicable).

10.1 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Referrals

Where safeguarding concerns meet the threshold for consultation or referral, the safeguarding team will contact the relevant Local Authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice or to make a formal referral. Following consideration of the information provided, the MASH team may advise the school to:

- continue monitoring and provide school-based support;
- initiate or contribute to an Early Help assessment;
- convene a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting;
- make a Child in Need referral;
- initiate Child Protection enquiries;
- take other appropriate safeguarding action.

Where advised, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will complete and submit a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) in accordance with the procedures of the relevant Local Authority.

As Riverside Bridge School educates pupils from a number of neighbouring local authorities, referrals will be made to the MASH team responsible for the area in which the child normally resides. Where a child presents with an unexplained injury to the face, head or other injury giving rise to safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will seek immediate advice from the relevant MASH team and act in accordance with the advice received.

10.2 Supporting staff following a referral

The school recognises that safeguarding concerns and child protection work can be emotionally demanding for staff. Any member of staff who has raised a safeguarding concern or been involved in a child protection case will be offered appropriate support, guidance and supervision from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, senior leaders or other appropriate professionals.

The school promotes a culture in which staff are encouraged to seek advice, reflect on safeguarding practice and access wellbeing support where required, recognising that effective safeguarding depends upon a confident, supported and professionally curious workforce.

Section 11

FAMILY HELP, STATUTORY SUPPORT AND SAFEGUARDING PLANS

Identifying need. Coordinating support. Protecting children.

Riverside Bridge School works within the local authority's graduated arrangements for providing help, support and protection to children and families. In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, this may include universal and school-based support, community-based Family Help, targeted Early Help, Child in Need support or statutory child protection intervention.

The terminology used by individual local authorities may vary. Where Barking and Dagenham or another pupil's home local authority continues to use the term Early Help, the school will follow that authority's published procedures and referral pathways.

11.1 Team Around the Family (TAF)

A Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting is a coordinated multi-agency approach used to support children and families who require additional help from two or more services but who do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention.

TAF meetings bring together professionals, parents or carers and, where appropriate, the child or young person to identify strengths, agree priorities and coordinate support. Agencies involved may include education, health, social care, therapy services and other community partners.

TAF meetings may be held as a one-off meeting or as a series of review meetings until agreed outcomes have been achieved.

11.2 Family Help, including Early Help

Family Help aims to identify and address emerging needs before they escalate into more significant safeguarding concerns.

Riverside Bridge School works within the local authority's graduated arrangements for supporting children and families. Depending on a child's needs, this may include universal services, school-based support, Family Help (including Early Help where this remains the local authority's terminology), or referral to Children's Social Care where statutory thresholds are met.

Where Riverside Bridge School believes that Family Help or Early Help would benefit a child or family, staff will discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Where appropriate, the DSL will initiate or contribute to a Family Help assessment, complete the required referral documentation and work collaboratively with the relevant local authority and partner agencies.
Family Help or Early Help may provide support for issues including parenting, emotional wellbeing, mental health, domestic abuse, financial difficulties, housing, substance misuse, school attendance, behaviour, healthy lifestyles and family relationships.

11.3 Child in Need

A Child in Need is defined under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of additional services, whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without such services, or who is disabled.
Where a Child in Need Plan is in place, Riverside Bridge School will contribute fully to welfare checks, assessments, review meetings and implementation of the agreed plan. Staff will provide reports, attend meetings and contribute to capturing the child's voice wherever possible using communication methods appropriate to the child's needs.

11.4 Child Protection Plan

A Child Protection Plan is implemented where a child is assessed as being at continuing risk of significant harm.
The school will actively participate in Child Protection Conferences, Core Group meetings and multi-agency planning, ensuring agreed actions are implemented promptly and progress is monitored.
Staff will remain vigilant to any changes in presentation, attendance, behaviour or family circumstances and will immediately report any additional concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

11.5 Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

Riverside Bridge School recognises that children who are looked after, previously looked after or have left care through adoption or other permanence arrangements may have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect or disrupted attachments.
The school will ensure that:

- the Designated Teacher works closely with the Virtual School, Social Worker and carers;
- Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are reviewed regularly;
- Pupil Premium Plus funding is used effectively to improve educational outcomes and emotional wellbeing;
- staff understand each child's legal status, care arrangements and delegated authority;
- confidentiality and dignity are maintained at all times.

11.6 Children who may be particularly vulnerable

The school recognises that some children may face additional barriers to safeguarding and may be at increased risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

These include, but are not limited to, children who:

- have special educational needs or disabilities;
- are young carers (staff should remain alert to pupils who may have caring responsibilities. Caring responsibilities may affect attendance, punctuality, attainment, behaviour, emotional wellbeing and participation in school life. Where concerns are identified, they should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will consider appropriate support for the pupil and family, including Family Help, Children's Social Care, young carers' services or other specialist support where appropriate);
- experience domestic abuse, parental mental ill-health or substance misuse;
- are looked after or previously looked after;
- are privately fostered;
- are asylum seekers or refugees;
- experience homelessness or temporary accommodation;
- have English as an additional language;
- are vulnerable to bullying, discrimination or prejudice;
- are pregnant or are parents;
- are displaying early signs of abusive, violent or harmful behaviour;
- are affected by child-to-caregiver abuse.
- are at risk of exploitation, radicalisation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

Staff recognise that vulnerability does not arise because of a child's characteristics alone but may be increased by barriers to communication, access to support, social attitudes or environmental factors. Staff will therefore maintain professional curiosity and consider each child's individual circumstances when assessing safeguarding concerns.

11.7 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Riverside Bridge School recognises that children with SEND experience additional safeguarding vulnerabilities and that abuse or neglect may present differently from their peers.

Staff understand that they must never assume that indicators of abuse, injury, emotional distress or changes in behaviour are solely related to a child's disability, autism or medical needs without appropriate exploration.

Children with SEND may be at greater risk because they may:

- have communication differences that make disclosures more difficult;
- rely on adults for intimate care and personal support;
- have limited understanding of healthy relationships or personal safety;
- be more vulnerable to bullying, exploitation or abuse;
- communicate distress through behaviour rather than spoken language.

All staff are expected to maintain professional curiosity, recognise subtle changes in presentation and consider the whole child when assessing safeguarding concerns. Staff will use each pupil's communication profile, regulation plan and knowledge of their usual presentation to help identify changes that may indicate abuse, neglect or unmet need.

Where appropriate, the child's views, wishes and feelings will be sought using communication methods that are meaningful and accessible to them, including symbols, AAC, signing, visual supports, objects of reference or behavioural observation.

Section 12

ONE CHANCE RULE

Recognising risk. Acting immediately. Missing no opportunity.

Riverside Bridge School recognises the importance of the 'One chance rule' in safeguarding practice. Staff understand that, in certain safeguarding situations, they may have only one opportunity to identify concerns, respond appropriately and act to protect a child from significant harm.

This principle is particularly relevant to cases involving Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Honour-Based Abuse (HBA), where delaying action or informing family members may significantly increase the risk to the child.

All staff understand that:

- they must take all disclosures, indicators and concerns seriously and act without delay;
- they must not attempt to investigate concerns themselves;
- they must never promise confidentiality to a child where there are safeguarding concerns;
- they must report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL;
- where a child is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm, a referral must be made to Children's Social Care and/or the Police without delay.

Staff also recognise that many pupils at Riverside Bridge School communicate differently and may disclose abuse through changes in behaviour, emotional regulation, communication, physical presentation or engagement rather than through spoken language. Professional curiosity and prompt action are therefore essential to ensuring that safeguarding opportunities are not missed.

The school recognises that failure to respond appropriately following a disclosure or safeguarding concern may result in the loss of a critical opportunity to protect a child. All staff are therefore expected to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and act immediately whenever concerns arise.

Section 13

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

Monitoring absence. Identifying risk. Taking action.

Riverside Bridge School recognises that all children are entitled to an education and that children missing education (CME), particularly repeatedly or for prolonged periods, are at increased risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and other safeguarding concerns.

The school maintains a strong culture of attendance and safeguarding, recognising that attendance concerns are often an early indicator that a child or family may require additional support. Attendance, punctuality, patterns of absence and exclusions are monitored closely by the Attendance Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and senior leaders to identify emerging safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity. Where concerns arise regarding a pupil's attendance or welfare, the school will take prompt and proportionate action, which may include:

- making first-day contact with parents or carers;
- undertaking welfare checks or home visits where appropriate;
- working with families to identify and remove barriers to attendance;
- considering whether Early Help or other multi-agency support is required;
- referring concerns to Children's Social Care where safeguarding thresholds are met;
- notifying the relevant Local Authority in accordance with statutory Children Missing Education procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will maintain oversight of pupils who are persistently absent, missing from education or repeatedly absent during the school day, recognising that repeated patterns of absence may indicate an increased risk of harm. Where a pupil is removed from roll or their whereabouts become unknown, Riverside Bridge School will comply with the statutory requirements set out in Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and notify the appropriate Local Authority without delay. Staff are expected to remain vigilant to indicators that a child may be at risk of exploitation, travelling abroad for the purposes of forced marriage or female genital mutilation, criminal exploitation or other safeguarding concerns associated with children missing education.

The school recognises that pupils with SEND may have additional barriers to school attendance due to medical needs, anxiety, sensory differences or communication needs. While these factors are considered carefully, staff will continue to maintain professional curiosity and will not assume that absence is solely attributable to a pupil's disability or additional needs where safeguarding concerns may also be present.

Further information regarding attendance monitoring, persistent absence, home visits and statutory attendance procedures can be found within the school's Attendance Policy.

Section 14

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND LOW-LEVEL CONCERNS

Raising concerns. Responding fairly. Maintaining accountability.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to safeguarding children and promoting a culture of openness, transparency and accountability. All allegations, concerns or low-level concerns relating to adults working with children will be taken seriously, managed promptly and dealt with fairly in accordance with statutory guidance and the Trust's Managing Allegations Policy.

All staff are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries and conduct themselves in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct. Wherever possible, meetings or work undertaken with individual pupils or families should take place in locations that are visible to others or where appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Guidance regarding professional conduct, safer working practice, appropriate physical contact, use of mobile technology, social media and maintaining professional boundaries is provided during induction and reinforced through regular safeguarding training.

Allegations or concerns arising from the use of restrictive physical intervention, restraint or seclusion will be managed under these procedures where there is concern that practice may have been unsafe, excessive, inappropriate or inconsistent with statutory guidance or the school's Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy.

Any allegation, concern or information suggesting that an adult working within the school may have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children,

must be reported immediately in accordance with the reporting procedures below and recorded using the school's Pink Form procedures.

Any allegation or concern about an adult working within the school must be reported immediately.

- Concerns about any member of staff, volunteer, contractor, agency worker or visitor must be reported to the Headteacher without delay.
- Concerns about the Headteacher must be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors or the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Partnership Learning who will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before any action is taken.

- Concerns about the Chair of Governors should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Partnership Learning.
- Concerns about the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Partnership Learning Trust) should be reported to the Chair of Trustees, who will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and act in accordance with statutory guidance.

Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child, appropriate action to protect the child must not be delayed while awaiting management advice.

All allegations and low-level concerns will be managed confidentially. Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to know in order to safeguard children, support those involved, conduct a fair process and comply with statutory guidance.

Staff must not discuss allegations or concerns with colleagues, attempt to investigate matters themselves or seek additional information beyond that required to make an appropriate referral. All allegations and concerns must be referred immediately through the appropriate reporting route set out within this policy.

The appropriate recipient of the allegation (Headteacher, Chair of Governors, Chief Executive Officer or Chair of Trustees, as applicable) will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) before any investigation or action is undertaken, except where immediate action is required to protect a child.

The school will manage all allegations and low-level concerns in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026);
- the Trust's Managing Allegations Policy;
- statutory guidance issued by the Local Authority.

Suspension will not be an automatic response. Decisions regarding suspension will be made following consultation with the LADO, Human Resources and other relevant professionals, taking account of the welfare of pupils, the rights of staff and the circumstances of the allegation.

Where appropriate, referrals will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) and other professional or regulatory bodies in accordance with statutory requirements.

The school recognises the legal restrictions relating to the publication of information that may identify a teacher who is the subject of an allegation. Staff, governors, parents and carers must not publish or share information that could identify an individual subject to an allegation, including through conversations, electronic communication or social media.

The names and contact details for the Chair of Governors, Chief Executive Officer, Chair of Trustees and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) are maintained within the school's safeguarding contacts list and are available to all staff via the staff intranet, safeguarding noticeboards and school office.

Section 15

WHISTLEBLOWING

Speaking up. Challenging unsafe practice. Protecting children.

Riverside Bridge School promotes a culture in which all staff feel confident to raise concerns about safeguarding practice, poor professional conduct, unsafe practice or failures within the school's safeguarding arrangements.

The school recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns if adults are unwilling to do so. All staff therefore have a professional responsibility to challenge unsafe practice and report concerns where they believe that children may be at risk.

Concerns should normally be raised with the Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead or another appropriate senior leader in accordance with the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Where concerns relate to the Headteacher, they should be raised with the Chair of Governors or the Trust Chief Executive Officer.

Where staff believe that concerns have not been appropriately addressed internally, or where they feel unable to raise concerns through the school's procedures, they may contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Local Authority or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line.

Staff may also refer directly to the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line without first using internal procedures where they believe this is appropriate.

NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line

Telephone: **0800 028 0285**

Email: **help@nspcc.org.uk**

The school is committed to ensuring that no member of staff suffers detriment, discrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine safeguarding concern in good faith.

Section 16

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

Safeguarding is embedded across every aspect of school life. This policy should therefore be read alongside the following policies and procedures, each of which contributes to the school's safeguarding framework.

Safeguarding and Governance

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Record Retention Policy

Behaviour, Wellbeing and Positive Support

- Positive Support and Regulation Framework
- Positive Support Graduated Response
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy
- Online Safety (E-Safety) Policy

Attendance and Inclusion

- Attendance Policy
- Children Missing Education Procedures
- SEND Policy
- Early Help Procedures

Medical Care and Personal Support

- Medical Needs, Medication and Allergy Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Intimate Care Policy

Health, Safety and Educational Provision

- Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Volunteer Policy

These policies work together to ensure that safeguarding is promoted through every aspect of school life and that all staff understand their individual and collective responsibilities for keeping children safe.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Recognising possible abuse and neglect

All staff should be alert to signs that a child may be experiencing harm. Indicators should always be considered in the context of the individual child, particularly where a pupil has SEND, communication differences, medical needs or behaviours that may make changes more difficult to recognise.

No single indicator confirms that abuse or neglect has occurred. Staff are not responsible for determining or investigating whether abuse has taken place. Any concern should be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately causing physical harm to a child.

Possible indicators may include:

- injuries that are unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation provided;
- repeated or unusual patterns of injury;
- flinching, fear or distress around particular people or situations;
- changes in behaviour, presentation or emotional regulation; and
- reluctance to change clothing or participate in activities where injuries may become visible.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional maltreatment that adversely affects a child's emotional development or wellbeing.

Possible indicators may include:

- significant changes in confidence, mood or emotional presentation;
- withdrawal, anxiety or heightened distress;
- extreme fear of making mistakes or displeasing others;
- changes in relationships or interaction with particular adults or peers; and
- behaviour that suggests persistent rejection, intimidation, humiliation or fear.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activity, whether or not the child understands what is happening. It can occur in person or online and can be perpetrated by adults or other children.

Possible indicators may include:

- sexualised behaviour or knowledge that is unusual for the individual pupil;
- unexplained distress associated with particular people, places or routines;
- changes in behaviour, communication or emotional regulation;
- physical discomfort, injury or other unexplained physical indicators; and
- sudden changes in relationships, online behaviour or willingness to engage with particular people.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs where this is likely to result in serious impairment of their health or development.

Possible indicators may include:

- persistent hunger, poor hygiene or unsuitable clothing;
- untreated or recurring medical needs;
- persistent tiredness or lack of appropriate supervision;
- significant changes in health, development or presentation; and
- a child's basic physical, emotional, educational or healthcare needs not being consistently met.

Additional considerations for pupils with SEND

At Riverside Bridge School, staff must remain particularly alert to the possibility that signs of abuse or neglect may be masked, misunderstood or incorrectly attributed to a pupil's SEND.

Changes in behaviour, communication, regulation, sleep, eating, continence, engagement, physical presentation or willingness to be supported by particular people may all require further consideration.

For pupils who do not communicate through speech, staff must recognise individual forms of communication including gesture, signing, AAC, body language, behaviour, vocalisation, avoidance, refusal and changes from the pupil's usual presentation.

A pupil's SEND must never be used as the automatic explanation for a change that could indicate harm.

Responding to a concern

If a pupil discloses something, or a member of staff observes or becomes aware of something that causes concern, staff must:

- Recognise → Respond → Record → Respond
    - Recognise the concern and take it seriously.
    - Respond calmly, listen and allow the pupil to communicate in their own way.
    - Record what was seen, heard or disclosed accurately and promptly, using the pupil's own words or communication wherever possible.

- Report the concern to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Where a concern is urgent, staff must report it verbally to the DSL or Deputy DSL immediately; the written record should be completed as soon as possible afterwards.

Reporting safeguarding concerns

Concern	Report to
Concern about a pupil	DSL or Deputy DSL immediately
Immediate risk of significant harm	Police (999) and Children's Social Care, then inform the DSL
Concern about a member of staff	Headteacher (Pink Form)
Concern about the Headteacher	Chair of Governors or CEO, Partnership Learning
Concern about the Chair of Governors	CEO, Partnership Learning
Concern about the CEO	Chair of Trustees

Staff must not investigate, ask leading questions, promise confidentiality or delay reporting while attempting to obtain further information.

Where a child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, emergency action must be taken without delay.

APPENDIX B

Recognising child-on-child abuse

Riverside Bridge School recognises that children can abuse other children and that child-on-child abuse can occur both inside and outside school and online. It can involve pupils of any age, sex or gender and may occur between two pupils or within a wider group.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying;
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos;
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children;
- upskirting; and
- initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals.

All staff must understand that child-on-child abuse is not an inevitable part of growing up and must never be dismissed as banter, having a laugh or children being children.

SEND considerations

Pupils with SEND may experience additional vulnerabilities to child-on-child abuse and may face additional barriers to recognising, communicating or reporting what has happened.

At Riverside Bridge School, staff must consider each pupil's communication, developmental understanding, relationships, sensory and emotional regulation needs and level of dependence on others when recognising and responding to concerns.

Behaviour that appears consensual or reciprocal should not automatically be assumed to be so. Staff should consider the pupils' relative understanding, communication, vulnerability, power, dependency and ability to communicate acceptance or refusal.

Equally, behaviour associated with a pupil's SEND must not be used to minimise behaviour that has caused, or could cause, harm to another pupil.

Sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour

All concerns involving sexual violence, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour must be taken seriously and referred to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Responses will consider:

- the nature and context of the behaviour;
- the ages and developmental understanding of the pupils involved;

- any difference in power, vulnerability or dependency;
- whether the behaviour was consensual and whether the pupils were able to understand and communicate consent;
- whether there is evidence of coercion, intimidation, exploitation or a pattern of behaviour;
- the immediate and ongoing safety of all pupils involved; and
- whether referral to Children's Social Care, the police or other agencies is required.

The school will respond in accordance with current statutory safeguarding guidance and will not wait for the outcome of a criminal investigation before taking appropriate action to protect pupils.

Responding to concerns

Where child-on-child abuse is known or suspected, staff must:

Recognise → Respond → Record → Report

Concerns must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Staff must not investigate the concern themselves, ask leading questions, attempt to mediate between pupils or require pupils to resolve safeguarding concerns between themselves.

The DSL will consider the appropriate safeguarding response, including immediate safety arrangements, risk assessment, parental involvement where appropriate, referrals to external agencies and any additional support required.

Supporting pupils

Riverside Bridge School recognises that safeguarding responsibilities apply to all pupils involved.

The pupil who has experienced harm will be supported to feel safe, heard and understood. Support will be personalised to their communication, emotional, sensory and therapeutic needs and will seek to minimise unnecessary disruption to their education.

A pupil who has displayed harmful behaviour will also receive appropriate safeguarding, educational and therapeutic support. The school will seek to understand the function, context and underlying factors associated with the behaviour while maintaining clear boundaries and protecting others from harm.

Understanding why harmful behaviour has occurred does not minimise its impact or remove the school's responsibility to protect other pupils.

Where pupils remain in the same school, arrangements will be carefully planned and reviewed to ensure that the pupil who has experienced harm is not disadvantaged or made responsible for managing the risk.

Recording, monitoring and review

All child-on-child abuse concerns, decisions and actions will be recorded through the school's safeguarding systems.

The DSL and safeguarding team will monitor individual concerns and wider patterns, including repeated incidents, locations, times, peer groups and emerging themes. This information will inform safeguarding action, risk management, curriculum provision and wider preventative work.
Child-on-child abuse will also be considered through the school's wider safeguarding monitoring and governance arrangements.

Further information and statutory requirements relating to child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour are contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education and associated statutory and local safeguarding guidance.

APPENDIX C

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If you are concerned about a child, act immediately.

This flowchart summarises Riverside Bridge School's safeguarding procedures and should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's associated safeguarding policies.

1. A STAFF MEMBER HAS A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD

A concern may arise from:

- observation
- injury
- behaviour
- disclosure
- attendance
- changes in communication
- comments made by a parent
- information from another professional

2. INFORM THE DSL OR DEPUTY DSL IMMEDIATELY

Record the concern without delay on Sleuth.
Share all relevant information.

3. DSL / DDSL CONSIDERS THE MOST APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

The DSL/DDSL will assess the information and decide on the next steps.

A. CONTINUE MONITORING

- No immediate safeguarding concern identified.
- Continue to observe and monitor.
- Record actions and rationale on Sleuth.
- Review if new information becomes available.

B. EARLY HELP / TAF

- Additional support for the child and family.
- School-led intervention or targeted support.
- Consider Team Around the Family (TAF) approach.
- Multi-agency Early Help assessment where appropriate.

C. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

- Consult with MASH.
- Consider MARF referral.
- Child in Need assessment.
- Child Protection referral.
- Follow Local Authority procedures.

D. ALLEGATION AGAINST AN ADULT

- Complete a Pink Form immediately.
- Report to the Headteacher.
- LADO referral made where appropriate.
- Follow Trust procedures.

4. REVIEW

The safeguarding team will continue to review concerns, monitor outcomes and escalate where necessary.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

- Listen carefully.
- Reassure the child.
- Do not investigate.
- Record facts accurately on Sleuth.
- Use the child's own words where possible.
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL/DDSL.
- Continue to monitor and report any further concerns.

SEND REMINDER

Many Riverside pupils communicate safeguarding concerns through changes in:

- behaviour
- regulation
- communication
- eating
- sleeping
- presentation

Know the child.
Notice the difference.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- The best interests of the child are paramount.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Maintain professional curiosity.
- Share concerns, don't delay.
- It could happen here.

IMMEDIATE DANGER? If a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, call **999** immediately. then inform the DSL as soon as possible.

Inspiring communication, empowering independence, achieving brighter futures.