SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Recruiting safely. Checking thoroughly.
Protecting pupils.



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 safer recruitment and establishes the principles, responsibilities and arrangements through which the school recruits and appoints adults who are suitable to work with children and young people.

Safer recruitment is an essential part of the school's safeguarding culture. Riverside Bridge School recognises that robust recruitment and vetting arrangements help deter unsuitable individuals, identify safeguarding concerns and ensure that appointments are based on appropriate evidence of suitability, competence, conduct and integrity. The school is committed to attracting and appointing skilled, values-led and trustworthy staff while ensuring that recruitment processes are fair, transparent, inclusive and compliant with safeguarding, employment and equality legislation. Safeguarding expectations will be embedded throughout recruitment, from workforce planning and advertising through to shortlisting, interview, pre-employment checks, appointment and induction.

As a specialist SEND school, Riverside Bridge School recognises the high level of trust placed in adults working with pupils and the potential vulnerability of children and young people who may have complex communication, medical, physical, sensory, learning or social and emotional needs. Recruitment decisions must therefore reflect the importance of professional curiosity, appropriate challenge and careful verification throughout the recruitment process. The school will apply the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, relevant Disclosure and Barring Service requirements and other applicable statutory guidance. Recruitment arrangements will be reviewed as requirements change so that checks, records and decision-making remain current and proportionate. KCSIE 2026 applies from 1 September 2026.

Safer recruitment is a shared responsibility. Governors, senior leaders, recruitment staff and all individuals involved in selection or appointment must understand their role, maintain confidentiality, declare conflicts of interest and ensure that safeguarding concerns, inconsistencies or unexplained information are explored before an appointment is confirmed.

Our responsibilities to pupils and families

Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to ensure that adults working with pupils have been recruited through robust and lawful processes and that required safeguarding checks and assurances are obtained and recorded. We will ensure that recruitment materials communicate our safeguarding expectations, selection processes explore suitability to work with children, references and employment history are scrutinised, appropriate pre-employment checks are completed, the Single Central Record is maintained accurately and concerns identified during recruitment are investigated before a final appointment decision is made.

Through these arrangements, Riverside Bridge School aims to recruit adults who demonstrate the professional standards, values and safeguarding awareness required to support pupils safely and effectively. We will continue to review recruitment practice, learn from audit and safeguarding activity and strengthen our arrangements in response to changes in statutory guidance and emerging risk.

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APPROVED BY:
Governing Board

APPROVED ON:
September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON:
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Section 01

PURPOSE

Establishing expectations. Protecting pupils. Supporting safe appointments.

The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent and robust approach to recruiting and appointing people who are suitable to work with children and young people at Riverside Bridge School.

Safer recruitment is not limited to completing pre-employment checks. It is a continuous safeguarding process that begins when a role is planned and continues through advertising, application, shortlisting, due diligence, selection, vetting, appointment, induction and ongoing employment.

The school's recruitment arrangements are designed to:

- deter individuals who may be unsuitable to work with children from applying;
- identify and explore concerns or inconsistencies during recruitment;
- assess candidates' suitability to work safely and professionally with pupils;
- verify identity, qualifications, experience and employment history;
- complete the statutory and other appropriate safeguarding checks for the role;
- ensure recruitment decisions are fair, evidence-based and appropriately documented; and
- maintain accurate evidence that required checks have been completed.

This policy applies to recruitment and appointment arrangements for employees and, where relevant, volunteers, agency and supply workers, contractors, trainee teachers and other adults who may work with or have access to pupils.

The precise checks required will depend upon the nature of the role, the individual's circumstances and the applicable statutory requirements. The school will therefore determine the appropriate checks for each appointment rather than applying requirements indiscriminately.

Section 02

LEGISLATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK

Meeting statutory duties. Applying current guidance. Maintaining compliance.

Riverside Bridge School will carry out safer recruitment in accordance with current legislation, statutory guidance and Partnership Learning requirements.

The principal safeguarding framework is Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, particularly Part Three, which sets out the safer recruitment responsibilities applying to schools and colleges.

Recruitment arrangements will also take account of relevant legislation and guidance relating to safeguarding, regulated activity, Disclosure and Barring Service checks, employment, equality, immigration, data protection, teacher regulation and childcare disqualification.

This includes, where relevant:

- the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and subsequent amendments;
- the Crime and Policing Act 2026;
- the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- the Education Act 2002;
- the Equality Act 2010;
- the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006;
- the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and applicable exceptions;
- the Childcare Act 2006 and relevant disqualification requirements;
- UK data-protection legislation;
- current Disclosure and Barring Service guidance;
- current Department for Education guidance relating to safeguarding and safer recruitment.

From 1st September 2026, the supervision exemption previously applying to certain regulated activity with children was removed. Activity involving teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children may therefore constitute regulated activity even where the individual is supervised, where the relevant frequency or overnight conditions are met.

The school will assess roles against the current statutory definition of regulated activity and current DBS eligibility guidance when determining the level of check that is appropriate. The removal of the supervision exemption does not mean that every role involving children automatically constitutes regulated activity; the nature and frequency of the activity must still be considered.

Where legislation or statutory guidance changes, Riverside Bridge School will update its recruitment arrangements accordingly without waiting for the next scheduled review of this policy.

Section 03

PRINCIPLES OF SAFER RECRUITMENT

Deterring unsuitable applicants. Assessing suitability. Recruiting fairly.

Riverside Bridge School will place safeguarding at the centre of recruitment and selection.

Recruitment processes will be planned and conducted in a way that communicates clearly that the school takes safeguarding seriously. Job descriptions, person specifications, advertisements, application processes and interviews will reflect the responsibilities associated with working in a school and, where appropriate, the specific safeguarding requirements of the role.

The school will operate fair and inclusive recruitment processes and will make appointment decisions on the basis of relevant evidence against the requirements of the role. Equality and reasonable-adjustment requirements will be considered throughout the process.

Safer recruitment requires professional curiosity. Information provided by candidates will not simply be accepted without appropriate scrutiny. Gaps, discrepancies, inconsistencies or concerns arising from applications, employment history, references, online searches, interviews or pre-employment checks will be explored before an appointment is confirmed.

The school will ensure that individuals involved in recruitment understand their safeguarding responsibilities and receive appropriate safer recruitment training. At least one person involved in the recruitment process will have undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training.

Recruitment decisions will be appropriately recorded so that the school can demonstrate the basis on which an appointment was made and the required safeguarding checks were completed.

No appointment will be regarded as unconditional until the checks and assurances required for that appointment have been satisfactorily completed, subject only to the limited circumstances in which statutory guidance permits an individual to begin work while a particular check is outstanding and appropriate safeguards have been put in place.

Section 04

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clarifying accountability. Sharing responsibility. Maintaining oversight.

Effective safer recruitment depends upon clear accountability and appropriate separation of responsibilities throughout the recruitment process.

The Governing Board will ensure that the school maintains effective safer recruitment arrangements consistent with statutory guidance and Partnership Learning requirements. It will receive appropriate assurance that recruitment procedures are implemented consistently, the Single Central Record is maintained appropriately and any significant safeguarding or compliance concerns identified through recruitment or audit are addressed. Governors involved directly in recruitment must follow this policy, maintain confidentiality, declare relevant conflicts of interest and complete appropriate safer recruitment training.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that safer recruitment arrangements are implemented effectively at Riverside Bridge School. The Headteacher will ensure that recruitment is appropriately authorised and planned, those involved understand their responsibilities, required safeguarding checks are completed and concerns identified during recruitment are appropriately explored. The Headteacher will also ensure that appropriate arrangements are maintained for the Single Central Record and that recruitment practice is subject to monitoring and quality assurance.

Staff responsible for coordinating recruitment will ensure that approved processes are followed consistently and that required documentation, references, checks and records are obtained and maintained. They will support recruitment panels in identifying outstanding information or checks and will ensure that concerns or discrepancies are escalated rather than resolved through assumption.

Recruitment Panel members are responsible for conducting a fair and safeguarding-focused assessment of candidates. Panel members will review the information available to them, explore relevant gaps or inconsistencies, assess the candidate's suitability to work with children and ensure that safeguarding considerations contribute meaningfully to the appointment decision. Panel members must declare any personal or professional relationship with a candidate that could create, or reasonably be perceived to create, a conflict of interest.

All Staff involved in any part of recruitment must maintain confidentiality, handle candidate information appropriately and raise concerns where they identify information that may be relevant to an individual's suitability.

Section 05

SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Planning carefully. Assessing consistently. Exploring suitability.

Safer recruitment will be embedded throughout the recruitment process rather than treated as a final checking exercise.

Planning the appointment

Before recruitment begins, the school will confirm the need for the role, its duties and responsibilities, the safeguarding implications of the post and the checks that are likely to be required. Job descriptions and person specifications will be reviewed so that expectations are clear and safeguarding responsibilities are appropriately reflected.

Advertising

Recruitment advertisements will communicate Riverside Bridge School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Advertising and candidate information will make clear that appointments are subject to appropriate safeguarding and pre-employment checks.

Application

Candidates will be required to provide sufficient information for the school to assess their suitability, qualifications, experience and employment history. CVs may provide supporting information but will not normally replace the school's required application process. Candidates will be expected to provide a complete employment history and account for gaps or periods where they were not in employment or education. Information relating to criminal records will be requested only in accordance with applicable legislation and at the appropriate stage of recruitment.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting will normally be undertaken by more than one person and against the requirements set out in the person specification. The same criteria will be applied consistently to candidates. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete any required self-declaration relating to information relevant to their suitability to work with children in accordance with current statutory guidance. Any gaps, inconsistencies or concerns identified during shortlisting will be recorded so that they can be explored appropriately before or during interview.

Online searches

As part of its due diligence, Riverside Bridge School will consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates in accordance with current KCSIE requirements. The purpose of the search is to identify information that is publicly available and may require exploration with the candidate because of its relevance to their suitability to work with children. It is not intended to undertake indiscriminate investigation into a candidate's private life. Searches will be conducted consistently and proportionately. Relevant concerns will be considered in context and candidates will be given an appropriate opportunity to explain information where necessary. Information that is irrelevant to the appointment or relates to protected characteristics will not be used unlawfully in recruitment decisions.

References

References form an important part of the school's assessment of suitability and will be obtained and scrutinised in accordance with current statutory guidance. References will be sought directly from the referee rather than relying upon documents supplied by the candidate. Open references or testimonials addressed "to whom it may concern" will not normally be accepted as sufficient evidence. Where possible and consistent with current statutory guidance, references will be obtained before interview so that relevant concerns or discrepancies can be explored during the selection process. References will be checked against information provided by the candidate, including employment history. Any inconsistencies, ambiguous statements, safeguarding concerns or unexplained information will be followed up directly with the referee and/or candidate as appropriate. Electronic references will be checked to establish that they originate from a legitimate source.

Interview and selection

Candidates will be assessed against the requirements of the role using a planned and consistent selection process. Interview will explore the candidate's experience, motivation, professional values and suitability to work with children. Safeguarding will form an explicit part of the assessment rather than being limited to a generic safeguarding question. Where appropriate, the panel will explore:

- the candidate's understanding of safeguarding and professional boundaries;
- attitudes towards children and young people;
- responses to concerns or unsafe practice;
- motivation for working at Riverside Bridge School;
- gaps or inconsistencies within employment history;
- information arising from references or due diligence;
- any other matter relevant to suitability for the role.

The school may use additional selection activities where these provide relevant evidence of suitability and competence. Appointment decisions will be based on the evidence gathered throughout the process rather than interview performance alone.

Conditional offer

Any offer of appointment will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the checks and requirements applicable to the role. Candidates will be informed that employment cannot be confirmed until the school is satisfied that the required safeguarding and pre-employment requirements have been met.

Section 06

SAFER RECRUITMENT CHECKS

Checking thoroughly. Verifying suitability. Recording assurance.

Riverside Bridge School will complete the pre-employment checks required by current legislation and statutory guidance before confirming an appointment. The checks required will depend upon the role and the individual's circumstances. They may include:

- verification of identity;
- an appropriate DBS check;
- a Children's Barred List check where the individual will engage in regulated activity and the school is legally entitled or required to obtain one;
- verification of the individual's right to work in the UK;
- prohibition from teaching checks where applicable;
- Section 128 direction checks where applicable;
- checks relating to individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK;
- verification of professional qualifications where these are a requirement of the role;
- appropriate references and scrutiny of employment history;
- childcare disqualification requirements where applicable;
- any other check required by legislation or current statutory guidance.

The school will use the level of DBS check that is legally appropriate for the role and will not request barred-list information where it is not legally entitled to do so.

Regulated activity and barred-list checks

The school will determine whether a role constitutes regulated activity using the current statutory definition and DBS/DfE guidance. From 1ST September 2026, supervision no longer removes otherwise qualifying teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising activity from the definition of regulated activity. Where the activity meets the applicable frequency or overnight condition, a supervised individual may therefore be in regulated activity. This change is particularly relevant to regular volunteers. For example, a volunteer who regularly teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises pupils may now be in regulated activity despite being supervised by a member of staff. In such circumstances, the school will obtain the appropriate enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information. Occasional volunteering does not automatically constitute regulated activity. The school will assess each role against the current statutory definition, taking account of the nature of the activity, its frequency and whether any overnight condition applies, and will obtain only the level of DBS check for which the role is legally eligible. It is a

criminal offence for a barred person to engage in regulated activity and for an organisation knowingly to permit a barred person to engage in such activity.

DBS certificates

Where a DBS certificate is required, the original certificate will be considered in accordance with current statutory guidance before or as soon as practicable after appointment. Where information is disclosed on a certificate, this will not automatically prevent appointment. The information will be assessed fairly and proportionately, taking account of its relevance to the role, safeguarding implications, circumstances and applicable legal requirements. Where appropriate, a documented risk assessment will inform the decision.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Where a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, the school will undertake the additional checks considered appropriate in accordance with KCSIE and current government guidance. The nature of checks available differs between countries. The school will therefore consider the information available and whether further evidence or assessment is necessary to establish suitability.

Right to work

The school will verify that individuals have the legal right to work in the UK before employment commences and will undertake any follow-up checks required where permission to work is time limited.

Qualifications and professional status

Where a qualification is an essential requirement of the post, it will be verified before appointment.
Teacher prohibition and other professional-status checks will be completed where applicable to the individual and role.

Health and fitness

The school will meet its obligations relating to health and fitness for work while ensuring compliance with equality legislation. Health-related enquiries will be made at the appropriate stage of recruitment and will focus on determining whether the individual is able to undertake the duties of the role, with reasonable adjustments where required.

Agency and supply staff

Riverside Bridge School will obtain written confirmation from the relevant agency or third-party organisation that the safeguarding checks required for the individual have been completed. The school will verify the identity of the individual presenting for work and ensure that the required assurances are recorded on the Single Central Record in accordance with KCSIE. Where information is disclosed by an agency check, the

school will obtain sufficient information to determine whether the individual is suitable to work at Riverside Bridge School. Use of an agency does not remove the school's responsibility to satisfy itself that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Contractors

The school will ensure that contractors working on site are subject to the checks and supervision arrangements required by current statutory guidance, taking account of whether the individual is engaging in regulated activity and the opportunity for contact with children. The school will not knowingly allow a contractor who is barred from regulated activity to undertake regulated activity at Riverside Bridge School.

Volunteers

Volunteer roles will be assessed individually according to the nature and frequency of the activity.
Where a volunteer engages in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS check including Children's Barred List information will be obtained. The September 2026 removal of the supervision exemption will be taken into account when determining whether regular volunteer activity constitutes regulated activity. For volunteers who are not in regulated activity, the school will determine whether another level of DBS check is appropriate and legally available and what other safeguards or supervision are required.

Trainee teachers

Where trainee teachers are employed by the school, the school will ensure the appropriate checks are completed. Where trainees are fee-funded and checks are undertaken by the initial teacher training provider, the school will obtain the assurances required by current statutory guidance.

Governors

Governors will be subject to the checks required by current legislation and KCSIE. Appropriate evidence will be maintained through the school's safeguarding and governance arrangements and recorded on the Single Central Record where required.

Starting work before a DBS certificate is received

The normal expectation is that required pre-employment checks will be satisfactorily completed before an individual begins work. Where current statutory guidance permits an individual to commence work before a DBS certificate has been received, this will be exceptional and subject to the appropriate checks already having been completed, including a separate barred-list check where required and legally available. A documented risk assessment will be completed, appropriate safeguards and supervision established and the outstanding check followed through to completion.

The removal of the supervision exemption from September 2026 does not itself require schools automatically to suspend an individual while a DBS application is being processed; safeguarding arrangements and any applicable sector-specific requirements must be considered.

Single Central Record

Riverside Bridge School will maintain a Single Central Record in accordance with KCSIE and applicable statutory requirements. The SCR will record the required checks and the date on which each check was completed or the relevant certificate obtained. The school will ensure that the SCR covers the categories of people required by statutory guidance, including employees and other relevant adults such as agency and supply workers. The SCR is an assurance record; it does not replace the need for appropriate recruitment documentation or evidence that checks have been undertaken. Responsibility for maintaining the SCR will be clearly allocated and the record will be subject to regular internal checking and governance assurance.

Section 07

RECORD KEEPING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Recording accurately. Protecting information. Maintaining evidence.

Recruitment records contain significant personal and sensitive information and will be handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy and wider information-governance arrangements.

Information collected through recruitment will be used only for legitimate recruitment, safeguarding, employment and regulatory purposes and access will be restricted to those who require it.

The school will maintain sufficient recruitment records to demonstrate that appropriate processes and checks have been completed and to support the accuracy of the Single Central Record.

Recruitment information will be retained in accordance with the Data Retention Policy and Data Retention Schedule and securely disposed of when it is no longer required.

DBS information will be handled in accordance with applicable legal requirements and DBS guidance. The school will not retain copies of DBS certificates for longer than is permitted or necessary.

Information arising from references, online searches, self-declarations and safeguarding checks will be treated confidentially and shared only where there is a legitimate need to do so.

Where recruitment identifies information that may require referral to another organisation or safeguarding authority, the school will act in accordance with its statutory responsibilities and seek appropriate advice where necessary.

Section 08

MONITORING, COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW

Auditing practice. Maintaining assurance. Strengthening recruitment.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that effective safer recruitment arrangements are maintained at Riverside Bridge School.

Recruitment processes will be monitored to ensure that statutory requirements and the expectations within this policy are being applied consistently.

Quality assurance will include review of recruitment documentation, pre-employment checks and the Single Central Record. Particular attention will be given to ensuring that required checks are completed, dates are accurately recorded, evidence is available and any exceptions or risk assessments are properly authorised.

The Single Central Record will be checked routinely by the staff responsible for its maintenance and will be subject to periodic senior leadership and governance scrutiny.

Where audits identify omissions, inconsistencies or weaknesses, corrective action will be taken promptly and consideration given to whether wider procedural, training or system changes are required.

Recruitment activity will also be reviewed in the light of safeguarding concerns, allegations, low-level concerns, probationary issues or other information that may identify learning for future recruitment practice.

The Governing Board will receive appropriate assurance that:

- statutory safer recruitment arrangements are operating effectively;
- the Single Central Record is appropriately maintained and checked;
- individuals involved in recruitment receive appropriate training;
- significant compliance issues are addressed;
- changes to statutory safeguarding requirements are incorporated into school practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, Keeping Children Safe in Education, DBS requirements, Trust arrangements or school operations require amendment.

Operational recruitment procedures, checklists and templates may be updated between formal policy reviews where necessary, provided that they remain consistent with this policy and current statutory requirements.

Section 09

RELATED POLICIES & FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy should be read alongside the following Riverside Bridge School and Partnership Learning policies, frameworks and arrangements:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Equality Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Retention Policy and Data Retention Schedule
- Information Security Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- relevant recruitment and HR procedures
- Single Central Record procedures and guidance

These documents collectively support the school's approach to safeguarding, recruitment, professional conduct and workforce assurance.

Detailed operational materials, including recruitment checklists, interview documentation, reference templates, self-declaration forms, DBS processing arrangements, risk-assessment forms and Single Central Record working instructions, will be maintained separately from this policy. This allows operational arrangements to be updated promptly when KCSIE, DBS requirements or Trust processes change without requiring formal revision of the policy itself.

Where there is uncertainty about the checks required for a particular appointment or category of worker, the school will refer to current Keeping Children Safe in Education, current DBS/DfE eligibility guidance and Partnership Learning arrangements rather than relying solely upon historic practice.