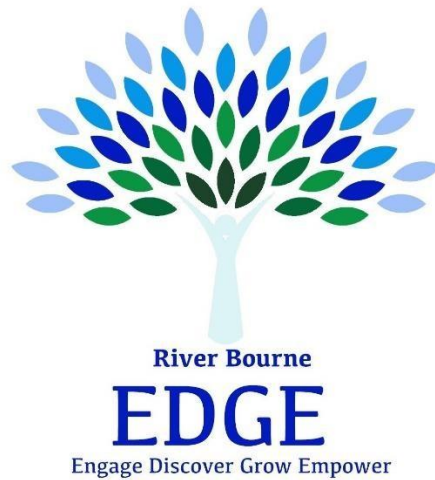




River Bourne Edge Alternative Provision

Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Owner: Head of Provision
Approved by: Senior Leadership Team
Policy Date: July 2026
Review Date: July 2027

1. Policy Statement

The River Bourne Edge is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all staff, volunteers, contractors, governors/directors and visitors to share this commitment.

We recognise that safeguarding begins with safer recruitment. Recruiting suitable adults, maintaining robust safeguarding procedures and promoting a culture of vigilance are essential in protecting children from harm.

This policy sets out the procedures The River Bourne Edge follows to ensure that all recruitment and selection processes are fair, transparent and compliant with current legislation and statutory guidance. It also outlines the ongoing responsibilities of staff once employed.

No individual will be permitted to work in regulated activity with children until all appropriate pre-employment checks have been completed satisfactorily.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that The River Bourne Edge:

- recruits the safest possible staff and volunteers;
 - prevents unsuitable people from working with children;
 - complies with statutory safer recruitment requirements;
 - promotes a culture of safeguarding throughout the organisation;
 - ensures all recruitment decisions are based on merit, suitability and safeguarding considerations;
 - protects children by maintaining rigorous recruitment, vetting and induction procedures.
-

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals working on behalf of The River Bourne Edge, including:

- permanent employees;
- temporary staff;
- agency workers;
- volunteers;
- governors/directors;
- contractors;
- students on placement;
- apprentices;
- work experience students;
- consultants and other adults working with children.

The principles within this policy apply regardless of whether an individual is paid or unpaid.

4. Safeguarding Commitment

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

The River Bourne Edge is committed to creating a culture where:

- safeguarding is embedded within recruitment practices;
- children's welfare is the highest priority;
- concerns are acted upon promptly;
- staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities;
- professional curiosity is encouraged;
- safer working practices are promoted;
- unsuitable individuals are prevented from working with children.

Recruitment decisions will always place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations.

5. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been developed in accordance with current legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Current Edition)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Current Edition)
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Police Act 1997
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 (where applicable)

The River Bourne Edge will review this policy whenever statutory guidance or legislation changes.

6. Recruitment Principles

The River Bourne Edge is committed to recruiting staff through a process that is:

- safe;
- transparent;
- fair;
- consistent;
- inclusive;
- compliant with safeguarding legislation.

Every recruitment process will include appropriate safeguarding measures designed to identify applicants who may be unsuitable to work with children.

Recruitment decisions will be based on:

- qualifications;
- skills and experience;
- values;
- safeguarding knowledge;
- professional conduct;
- suitability to work with children.

Safeguarding considerations will form part of every stage of the recruitment process.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team has overall responsibility for ensuring safer recruitment practices are implemented consistently throughout The River Bourne Edge.

Senior leaders will ensure:

- recruitment procedures comply with statutory guidance;
 - safeguarding remains central to recruitment decisions;
 - appropriate checks are completed before employment commences;
 - recruitment records are maintained accurately;
 - safer recruitment practices are regularly reviewed.
-

Head of Provision

The Head of Provision has operational responsibility for safer recruitment and will ensure that:

- recruitment processes follow this policy;
 - appropriate pre-employment checks are completed;
 - recruitment records are maintained;
 - safeguarding concerns identified during recruitment are appropriately considered;
 - staff receive suitable induction and safeguarding training.
-

Recruitment Panel

Wherever possible:

- at least one member of every interview panel will have completed accredited Safer Recruitment Training;
- panel members will understand safeguarding responsibilities;
- safeguarding questions will form part of every interview;

- any gaps or inconsistencies in employment history will be explored;
 - references and other recruitment checks will be scrutinised before appointment.
-

Human Resources

The River Bourne Edge, supported by its HR provider where applicable, will ensure that:

- recruitment documentation remains compliant with current legislation;
 - appropriate employment checks are completed;
 - personnel records are maintained securely;
 - recruitment records comply with UK GDPR.
-

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- provide safeguarding advice during recruitment where required;
 - oversee the Single Central Record;
 - ensure safeguarding concerns identified during recruitment are appropriately managed;
 - advise on safeguarding risk assessments where necessary;
 - work alongside senior leaders regarding low-level concerns and allegations.
-

8. The Single Central Record (SCR)

The River Bourne Edge maintains a Single Central Record in accordance with statutory guidance.

The record includes appropriate recruitment and vetting information for:

- employees;
- agency workers;
- volunteers;
- contractors where required;
- governors/directors.

The SCR is regularly reviewed to ensure that all required checks have been completed and accurately recorded.

9. Planning and Advertising Vacancies

The River Bourne Edge will ensure that every recruitment process begins with careful planning to identify the skills, knowledge, experience and safeguarding responsibilities required for the role.

Before advertising a vacancy, the following documents will be prepared or reviewed:

- Job Description

- Person Specification
- Application Form
- Recruitment Information Pack
- Safeguarding Statement

Every advertisement will clearly state that:

The River Bourne Edge is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Appointments are subject to satisfactory safeguarding checks, including an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, online searches and satisfactory references.

Advertisements will also state where appropriate:

- whether the role involves regulated activity;
- that employment is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- that shortlisted candidates will be subject to an online search;
- that identity, qualifications and right to work checks will be completed before appointment.

10. Applications

The River Bourne Edge will only accept applications made using the organisation's official application form.

CVs may be submitted alongside an application but will **not** be accepted as the sole application document.

Application forms enable The River Bourne Edge to obtain consistent information from all applicants and identify any safeguarding concerns at an early stage.

Applicants will be required to provide:

- full personal details;
- current and previous names where applicable;
- current address;
- National Insurance number;
- full employment history since leaving secondary education;
- explanations for all gaps in employment or education;
- qualifications and professional memberships;
- details of all relevant experience;
- details of two referees;
- a declaration regarding criminal convictions and suitability to work with children.

Incomplete application forms may be returned to applicants before being considered.

11. Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be undertaken by at least two members of staff wherever possible.

The recruitment panel will assess applications against the published Person Specification.

During shortlisting particular attention will be given to:

- unexplained gaps in employment;
- frequent changes of employment;
- inconsistencies between the application form and CV;
- incomplete employment history;
- safeguarding concerns;
- qualifications and experience;
- suitability to work with children.

Any concerns identified during shortlisting will be explored during interview.

12. References

References form an essential part of safer recruitment.

The River Bourne Edge will normally obtain **at least two references** before confirming an appointment.

Wherever possible, references will be obtained before interview to enable any issues to be explored with candidates during the selection process.

References will:

- be obtained directly from the referee;
- come from the applicant's current or most recent employer wherever possible;
- include a referee with line management responsibility;
- confirm dates of employment;
- confirm the applicant's role and responsibilities;
- comment on suitability to work with children;
- identify any disciplinary action relating to children;
- identify whether the referee has any safeguarding concerns.

Open references or testimonials provided by candidates will not be accepted.

Where an applicant has worked for a single employer for many years, one current reference may be accepted alongside verification of previous employment history where appropriate.

Any discrepancies, vague statements or concerns identified within references will be discussed with the referee and explored with the candidate before an appointment is confirmed.

13. Online Searches

In accordance with current statutory guidance, The River Bourne Edge will carry out an online search of shortlisted candidates.

The purpose of the search is to identify any publicly available information that may be relevant to the candidate's suitability to work with children.

Online searches will:

- only review information that is publicly available;
- be carried out consistently for all shortlisted candidates;
- not discriminate against candidates;
- be undertaken by a person not directly involved in making the appointment where possible.

Any concerns identified through the online search will be discussed with the candidate during interview before any recruitment decision is made.

Information unrelated to safeguarding or professional conduct will not influence recruitment decisions.

14. Interviews

All shortlisted candidates will attend a formal interview.

The interview process is designed not only to assess knowledge, skills and experience but also to determine a candidate's suitability to work with children.

Interviews will normally include:

- safeguarding questions;
- questions relating to professional boundaries;
- scenarios exploring safeguarding practice;
- exploration of employment history;
- discussion of any gaps in employment;
- discussion of references where appropriate;
- discussion of information identified through online searches.

Candidates will also be asked about:

- their understanding of safeguarding responsibilities;
- child protection procedures;
- maintaining professional boundaries;
- promoting children's welfare;
- equality, diversity and inclusion;
- working with vulnerable children.

The interview panel will assess not only competence but also attitudes, values and behaviours that align with The River Bourne Edge's safeguarding culture.

15. Conditional Offers of Employment

Any offer of employment made by The River Bourne Edge will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of all required pre-employment checks.

No candidate will commence employment in regulated activity until all statutory safeguarding checks have been completed and considered satisfactory, unless an appropriate risk assessment has been completed and robust supervision arrangements are in place in accordance with statutory guidance.

16. Recruitment Decisions

Appointment decisions will be based on the overall evidence gathered throughout the recruitment process.

This includes:

- application form;
- interview performance;
- references;
- online search findings;
- safeguarding responses;
- qualifications;
- pre-employment checks;
- suitability to work with children.

Safeguarding considerations will always take priority when making recruitment decisions.

Where safeguarding concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved, The River Bourne Edge reserves the right not to proceed with an appointment.

17. Pre-Employment Checks

Before any individual commences employment, The River Bourne Edge will complete all statutory pre-employment checks relevant to the role.

No individual will begin work in regulated activity until all required checks have been completed satisfactorily unless permitted under current statutory guidance and appropriate safeguarding risk assessments and supervision arrangements are in place.

The required checks may include:

- verification of identity;
 - right to work in the UK;
 - enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check;
 - Children's Barred List check where applicable;
 - verification of qualifications;
 - prohibition from teaching checks (where applicable);
 - prohibition from management checks (where applicable);
 - overseas criminal record checks where required;
 - references;
 - medical fitness declaration where appropriate;
 - online search of shortlisted candidates.
-

18. Identity Verification

The identity of every successful applicant will be verified before employment begins.

Original documentation will be seen wherever possible.

Acceptable documents include:

- passport;
- photocard driving licence;
- birth certificate;
- proof of current address.

The River Bourne Edge will follow current Government guidance regarding acceptable identity documentation.

19. Right to Work in the UK

All successful applicants must demonstrate their legal right to work in the United Kingdom.

The River Bourne Edge will carry out right to work checks in accordance with current Home Office guidance before employment commences.

Copies of relevant documentation will be retained in personnel files in accordance with UK GDPR and data retention requirements.

20. Qualifications

Where qualifications are essential to the role, original certificates or verified electronic evidence will be obtained before appointment.

Professional registrations and memberships will also be verified where appropriate.

Any discrepancies will be investigated before employment commences.

21. Enhanced DBS Checks

The River Bourne Edge is committed to ensuring that all adults working with children are appropriately vetted.

Enhanced DBS checks will be obtained where required by legislation.

Where a role involves regulated activity, an **Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information** will be obtained before employment.

The level of DBS check required will depend upon the duties of the role and current statutory guidance.

If a DBS certificate contains information, a safeguarding risk assessment will be undertaken before any appointment is confirmed.

The nature, seriousness, relevance and date of any information disclosed will be considered carefully alongside the responsibilities of the post.

22. DBS Renewal

Although legislation does not require routine renewal of DBS certificates, The River Bourne Edge requires employees engaged in regulated activity to obtain a renewed Enhanced DBS certificate every **three years** as part of our safeguarding arrangements.

Additional DBS checks may also be requested where:

- safeguarding concerns arise;
 - there has been a significant break in service;
 - an employee changes to a different role involving increased safeguarding responsibilities;
 - statutory guidance changes.
-

23. Prohibition Checks

Where applicable, The River Bourne Edge will complete additional safeguarding checks before employment.

These may include:

- Teacher Prohibition Order checks;
- Section 128 direction checks for management roles;
- Professional regulator checks where appropriate.

Checks will be completed using the Department for Education's Teacher Services system or other approved systems.

24. Overseas Checks

Where an applicant has lived or worked overseas, additional safeguarding enquiries may be required.

These may include:

- overseas criminal record certificates;
- certificates of good conduct;
- letters of professional standing;
- verification of overseas qualifications;
- employment references from overseas employers.

The level of checking undertaken will reflect current Government guidance and the applicant's individual circumstances.

25. Medical Fitness

Successful applicants may be asked to complete a confidential medical declaration where appropriate to ensure they are medically fit to undertake the duties of the role.

Reasonable adjustments will always be considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Medical information will be treated confidentially and processed in accordance with UK GDPR.

26. Agency Staff

The River Bourne Edge recognises that agency staff play an important role in supporting students.

Before agency staff begin work, written confirmation will be obtained from the supplying agency confirming that all required safer recruitment checks have been completed.

This includes confirmation of:

- identity;
- Enhanced DBS checks where appropriate;
- Barred List checks where applicable;
- right to work;
- qualifications where required;
- references.

On arrival, agency staff will:

- provide photographic identification;
 - sign in using the visitor procedures;
 - receive a safeguarding briefing;
 - be informed of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding procedures.
-

27. Contractors

Contractors working on site will be subject to appropriate safeguarding arrangements.

The level of checking required will depend upon:

- the nature of the work;
- the level of contact with children;
- whether work constitutes regulated activity;
- whether they will be supervised at all times.

Where appropriate, contractors will be required to provide evidence that relevant DBS checks have been completed.

All contractors will follow The River Bourne Edge safeguarding procedures whilst on site.

28. Volunteers

The River Bourne Edge values the contribution made by volunteers whilst recognising the need for robust safeguarding arrangements.

Before volunteers begin work, an appropriate safeguarding risk assessment will be completed.

Depending upon the nature of the role, this may include:

- references;
- identity checks;
- Enhanced DBS checks;
- Children's Barred List checks where applicable;
- interviews;
- safeguarding induction.

Volunteers undertaking regulated activity will receive the same safeguarding checks as employees.

Volunteers who are not undertaking regulated activity will always be appropriately supervised.

29. Single Central Record (SCR)

The River Bourne Edge maintains a comprehensive Single Central Record (SCR) in accordance with statutory guidance.

The SCR records the completion of all required safeguarding checks for relevant individuals working within the organisation.

Information recorded may include:

- identity checks;
- Enhanced DBS checks;
- Children's Barred List checks;
- prohibition checks;
- Section 128 checks where applicable;
- right to work;
- qualifications;
- overseas checks;
- references;
- dates checks were completed.

The Single Central Record is maintained by authorised staff and reviewed regularly by senior leaders to ensure ongoing compliance with statutory requirements.

30. Induction

All new employees, volunteers, agency staff and regular contractors will receive a comprehensive induction before or as soon as reasonably practicable after commencing work.

The induction programme will ensure individuals understand:

- The River Bourne Edge's safeguarding culture and expectations.
- Their individual safeguarding responsibilities.
- How to report safeguarding concerns.
- The identity and role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL.
- Expectations regarding professional conduct and safer working practice.
- Procedures for reporting low-level concerns and allegations.

As part of induction, staff will be required to read and confirm they understand the following policies and guidance:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use of IT Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Part One (or Annex A, where appropriate) of **Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)**

Staff will sign to confirm they have read and understood the relevant documentation.

31. Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding training is essential to maintaining a safe culture across The River Bourne Edge.

All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training appropriate to their role.

This will include:

- safeguarding induction;
- regular safeguarding updates;
- Prevent awareness training;
- online safety awareness;
- recognising signs of abuse and neglect;
- child-on-child abuse;
- professional boundaries;
- reporting procedures.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL will complete enhanced safeguarding training appropriate to their responsibilities and refresh this in line with statutory guidance.

Staff will also receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the year to ensure they remain aware of current legislation, emerging risks and local safeguarding issues.

32. Professional Conduct and Safer Working Practice

All adults working at The River Bourne Edge are expected to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct.

Staff must always:

- place the welfare of children first;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- act as positive role models;
- treat students with dignity and respect;
- challenge discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately;
- work openly and transparently;
- follow the Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff should remain vigilant to:

- child-on-child abuse;
- online abuse;
- exploitation;
- serious violence;
- extra-familial harm;
- radicalisation;
- neglect;
- changes in behaviour that may indicate a safeguarding concern.

Professional curiosity and respectful challenge are encouraged where concerns arise.

33. Low-Level Concerns

The River Bourne Edge recognises the importance of identifying and responding appropriately to low-level concerns.

A low-level concern is behaviour that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct but does not meet the threshold for managing allegations.

Examples may include:

- being over-familiar with students;
- inappropriate language;
- personal social media contact;
- failing to maintain professional boundaries;
- behaviour that could be misinterpreted.

All staff are encouraged to report low-level concerns promptly.

Reports should be made to the Head of Provision (or Chair of Directors where concerns relate to the Head of Provision).

Low-level concerns will:

- be recorded confidentially;
- be reviewed appropriately;
- identify any emerging patterns;
- support professional reflection and improvement;
- contribute to maintaining a strong safeguarding culture.

Where concerns indicate behaviour may have reached the harm threshold, the procedures for managing allegations will be followed.

34. Allegations Against Staff

The River Bourne Edge takes all allegations against adults working with children seriously.

Any allegation that an adult has:

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

will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance.

The Head of Provision (or Chair of Directors where appropriate) will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay where the allegation meets, or may meet, the harm threshold.

The welfare of the child will remain the primary consideration throughout any investigation.

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible whilst ensuring appropriate safeguarding action is taken.

35. Record Keeping

Accurate recruitment and safeguarding records are essential.

The River Bourne Edge will securely maintain records relating to:

- recruitment processes;
- references;
- safeguarding checks;
- DBS information;
- the Single Central Record;
- low-level concerns;

- allegations;
- safeguarding training.

Records will be retained in accordance with the organisation's Records Retention Schedule and UK GDPR.

Access to confidential records will be restricted to authorised personnel.

36. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor compliance with this policy through:

- regular reviews of the Single Central Record;
- audits of personnel files;
- monitoring safeguarding training;
- review of recruitment practices;
- review of low-level concerns;
- review of safeguarding incidents;
- annual policy review.

Lessons learned from recruitment activity, safeguarding concerns and audits will be used to continually improve practice.

37. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually;
- following changes to legislation or statutory guidance;
- following significant safeguarding incidents where appropriate;
- following recommendations from safeguarding reviews or inspections.

The review will be undertaken by the Head of Provision in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and HR provider where appropriate.

38. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Low-Level Concerns Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equality Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy

- Acceptable Use of IT Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Complaints Policy
-

39. Equality Statement

The River Bourne Edge is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Recruitment decisions will always be based on an individual's suitability, qualifications, experience and ability to fulfil the requirements of the role.

The River Bourne Edge will not unlawfully discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Reasonable adjustments will be made throughout the recruitment process where required.

40. Policy Summary

Safer recruitment is the first step in safeguarding children.

The River Bourne Edge is committed to recruiting and retaining adults who share our values and commitment to protecting children and young people.

Through robust recruitment procedures, comprehensive safeguarding checks, effective induction, ongoing training and a culture of professional curiosity, we aim to ensure that every child attending The River Bourne Edge is cared for by safe, skilled and suitable adults.