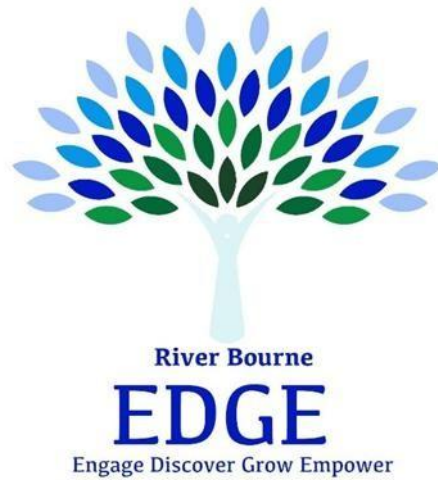




The River Bourne Edge Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

The River Bourne Edge fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection.

Policy agreed (date):	September 2026
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Role	Name	Tel.	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Karen Wright	07917 823548	karen.wright@theriverbourneedge.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Maxine Fox	07917 823685	maxine.fox@theriverbourneedge.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Becky Reynolds		becky.reynolds@theriverbourneedge.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Harriet Kelly		harriet.kelly@theriverbourneedge.com
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Karen Perry		Karen.perry@theriverbourneedge.com
Designated staff member for LAC and Care Leavers	Karen Wright	07917 823548	karen.wright@theriverbourneedge.com

Children's Social Care request for a service (previously referral): Integrated Front Door - Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub	0300 456 0108
Out of hours	0300 456 0100
Immediate risk of significant harm or injury - Police	999

If you believe a learner is at immediate risk of significant harm or injury, you must call the police on 999.

1. Introduction

The River Bourne Edge is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our learners. We will fulfil our local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following key documents:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- The procedures of the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP)
- The Prevent Duty Guidance (2023)
- Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2024)
- Alternative Provision - Statutory guidance 2013

The aim of this policy is to ensure:

- all our learners are safe and protected from harm.
- safeguarding procedures are in place to help learners feel safe and learn to stay safe.
- adults in the organisation understand expected behaviours and the organisation's responsibilities in relation to child protection.

2. Scope

Safeguarding children is defined as:

- ensuring that children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care;
- acting to enable all children to have the best life chances;
- preventing impairment of children's mental or physical health or development; and
- protecting children from maltreatment.

Safeguarding covers a range of measures that includes child protection procedures. It encompasses a preventative approach to keeping children safe that incorporates learner health and safety, relationships and behaviour, preventing bullying, supporting learners with medical conditions, personal and social education, first aid, online safety and site security.

This policy should be read alongside relevant River Bourne Edge policies, including the Relationships Policy, Staff Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Attendance Policy, SEND Policy, Online Safety Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy, Low-Level Concerns Policy and First Aid Policy.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for or on behalf of The River Bourne Edge.

For the purposes of this policy:

- Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the organisation full time or part time, in a paid or regular voluntary capacity.
- A volunteer is a person who performs an activity involving spending time unpaid with our organisation, except for approved expenses.
- Parent refers to birth parents and other adults undertaking a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.
- Child refers to all children attending our provision and any child under the age of 18 who encounters our organisation.

Any safeguarding concerns or disclosures of abuse relating to a learner at our provision or outside operating hours are within the scope of this policy.

3. Expectations

All staff are:

- familiar with this safeguarding policy and have an opportunity to contribute to its review;
- alert to signs and indicators of possible abuse, neglect or exploitation;
- able to record and report concerns as set out in this policy;
- able to deal with a disclosure of abuse from a learner;
- involved, where required, in the implementation of individual education programmes, support plans, Child in Need plans and inter-agency Child Protection Plans.

All staff have read and understood Part 1 of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and staff must never assume another adult will report a concern.

4. Safeguarding Leadership and Organisational Responsibilities

Karen Wright is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Maxine Fox, Becky Reynolds, Harriet Kelly and Karen Perry are Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs). The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. The DSL and/or a DDSL is always available during provision hours for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns.

Karen Wright is also the designated staff member responsible for Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers, even if there are no LAC currently attending the provision.

Senior leadership will make sure that policies and procedures are in line with national and local safeguarding requirements and that the following safeguarding essentials are in place:

- learners are taught about online safety;
- staff read KCSiE Part 1 and receive safeguarding, online safety and Prevent training;
- Staff Behaviour, Whistleblowing and safeguarding procedures are understood;
- learner voice is promoted;
- children absent or missing from education, early help, FGM, forced marriage/honour-based abuse, child-on-child abuse, SEND and safeguarding, concerns about staff conduct and allegations management are addressed;
- the DSL/DDSL arrangements, designated LAC lead, safer recruitment and safeguarding policy review arrangements are effective.

5. Safer Recruitment

All staff are subject to safer recruitment processes and checks and we follow the guidance set out in Part 3 of KCSiE.

The River Bourne Edge scrutinises applications for paid and voluntary posts, undertakes interviews and makes appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). We maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) of the essential checks set out in KCSiE.

At least one person on any appointment panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. This training is updated at least every three years. Online searches may be carried out on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence checks, and relevant concerns will be explored with the candidate during recruitment.

6. Staff Behaviour Policy (Safer Working Practice)

The River Bourne Edge is committed to positive academic, social and emotional outcomes for learners underpinned by a strong safeguarding ethos. We are equally committed to the protection and welfare of staff, who are expected to adhere to the highest standards of professional behaviour.

The Staff Behaviour Policy sets out behaviours that should be avoided, as well as those that constitute safe practice. Teaching staff are additionally expected to act within the personal and professional conduct requirements of the Teachers' Standards.

7. Visitors

All visitors complete the provision's signing in/out arrangements, are appropriately identified while on site and are provided with key safeguarding information, including the contact details of safeguarding personnel.

Scheduled visitors attending in a professional role may be asked to provide evidence of their identity and professional role. If a visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown, the relevant organisation will be contacted to verify identity where necessary. Visitors must not have unsupervised access to children unless appropriate safeguarding checks and arrangements are in place.

8. Curriculum - Teaching About Safeguarding

Learners access a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

We provide opportunities for learners to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge that promote their safety and wellbeing, including:

- developing self-esteem and communication skills;
- developing strategies for self-protection, including online safety;
- developing understanding of boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults and peer relationships, including positive relationships and consent.

Safeguarding education is adapted where necessary to meet learners' age, SEND, communication needs and level of understanding.

9. Early Help

All staff can identify children who may benefit from early help as a problem emerges and discuss this with the DSL/DDSL.

The DSL uses the Digital Assessment and Referral Tool as appropriate as part of a holistic assessment of a child's needs and the Multi-Agency Thresholds for Safeguarding Children on the SVPP website to support decisions about suitable action.

10. Identifying the Signs

All staff know how to recognise and are alert to signs of neglect and abuse. Definitions and guidance in What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners, KCSiE 2026 and safeguarding training are important reference points.

Staff should maintain professional curiosity and report concerns rather than attempting to diagnose or investigate them themselves.

11. Responding to Concerns or Disclosures of Abuse

The River Bourne Edge uses the current SVPP safeguarding flowcharts and procedures. Staff adhere to safeguarding training requirements when concerned about abuse or responding to a disclosure.

Staff understand that they must NOT:

- take photographs of injuries;
- postpone or delay the opportunity for the learner to talk;
- take detailed notes while the learner is speaking or ask the learner to write an account;
- try to investigate the allegation;
- promise confidentiality or say they will keep a secret;
- approach or inform the alleged abuser.

Staff should listen calmly, allow the learner to speak, avoid leading questions, reassure the learner that they have done the right thing by telling someone, explain that information must be shared with people who can help, record the concern accurately and report it without delay to the DSL/DDSL.

All staff record any concern or disclosure and ensure the DSL/DDSL receives it without delay. In the absence of the DSL/DDSL, staff know to speak directly to the Integrated Front Door. In some circumstances the DSL/DDSL or a member of staff may ring the Integrated Front Door for advice.

The voice of the learner is central to safeguarding practice and learners are encouraged to express their views and have them given due weight in matters affecting them.

12. Children Who Are Absent and/or Missing from Education

Staff recognise that being absent from education, as well as missing education, can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns including neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal

exploitation, mental health concerns and other forms of harm. Patterns of absence will be reviewed promptly and safeguarding action taken where appropriate.

Clear arrangements are established regarding attendance monitoring, safeguarding responsibilities, information sharing and communication between the commissioning school and The River Bourne Edge.

Staff report immediately to the DSL/DDSL if they know of any child who may be:

- absent from education persistently, for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions;
- missing - whereabouts unknown; or
- missing education - compulsory school age with no registered education place and not electively home educated.

Karen Wright, as the designated staff member for LAC and care leavers, discusses unauthorised or unexplained absence of Looked After Children with the Virtual School when required.

The DSL shares any unauthorised or unexplained absence of children who have an allocated social worker within 24 hours.

Where reasonable attempts to contact the family have been unsuccessful and there are welfare concerns, the DSL follows the SVPP procedure and consults/refers to the Integrated Front Door as appropriate. Where there are no known welfare concerns, we follow our unauthorised absence procedures and report concerns to the child's main registered school base/Education Welfare Service.

Where a learner leaves the provision unexpectedly during a session, staff follow the Missing Student / Child Missing from Provision Procedure.

13. Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Learners with additional needs face an increased risk of abuse and neglect. Staff take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect and never assume that behaviour, mood or injury relates to additional needs without further exploration.

Staff understand that communication barriers and other challenges can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in learners with SEND, and that learners with SEND can be disproportionately affected by bullying and peer isolation.

Pastoral support is provided as appropriate. The DSL/DDSL works with the commissioning school's SENCo and other relevant professionals to identify learners with additional communication needs and, whenever possible, learners are given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills.

14. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Staff will inform the DSL/DDSL immediately if they suspect a girl is at risk of FGM.

Teachers have a specific legal duty to report to the Police where, in the course of their professional duties, they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. The DSL should also be informed.

15. Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Abuse

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or another form of coercion is used.

Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even where violence, threats or coercion are not used. This includes non-binding, unofficial marriages.

Staff will inform the DSL/DDSL immediately if they suspect a child is at risk of forced marriage. Staff must not attempt to mediate with family members where doing so could increase risk. So-called honour-based abuse may include forced marriage, FGM and other abuse; there is no honour in abuse.

16. Child-on-Child Abuse

All learners have a right to attend education provision and learn in a safe environment. All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously. It is not tolerated, passed off as banter or seen as part of growing up.

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

- bullying, including cyberbullying;
- inappropriate or offensive language or messaging;
- physical abuse, gender-based violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- sharing nude or semi-nude images and image-based abuse;
- upskirting;
- initiation or hazing-type violence and rituals;
- coercive or controlling behaviour and abuse within intimate personal relationships;
- technology-assisted harmful sexual behaviour, online coercion and the misuse of artificial intelligence (AI) to create, manipulate or distribute harmful, abusive or sexually explicit content.

Child-on-child abuse is dealt with as a safeguarding issue, recorded as such and not simply managed through the Relationships Policy.

Any learner who may have been victimised and/or displayed harmful behaviours, along with other learners affected, will be supported and that support regularly reviewed. The DSL liaises with other professionals to develop robust risk assessments and appropriate targeted work where a learner may pose a potential risk to others, using a contextual safeguarding approach where appropriate.

Where nude or semi-nude images are involved, staff should not routinely view, copy, print, forward or save the image and must refer the matter immediately to the DSL/DDSL.

Restorative approaches will only be considered where they are safe, appropriate and genuinely voluntary; a learner who has experienced harm will not be required to participate.

17. Domestic Abuse and Operation Encompass

Staff understand that domestic abuse can include controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse and can encompass psychological, physical, sexual, financial/economic and emotional harm.

Children can be victims of domestic abuse in their own right where they see, hear or experience its effects.

The DSL liaises with partner schools/agencies as part of Operation Encompass in Wiltshire. When relevant information is received, the DSL ensures key staff provide emotional and practical support to the child according to their needs.

18. Mental Health

All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a learner has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff understand that abuse, neglect and other adverse childhood experiences can have a lasting impact on mental health, behaviour and education, and that staff have a duty to observe learners day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Staff should be alert to significant changes in behaviour, persistent withdrawal, ongoing sleep difficulties, deterioration in self-care, expressions of self-harm or other signs of emotional distress. Where a learner appears to be at immediate risk of harm to themselves or others, emergency services will be contacted without delay. If a mental health concern is also a safeguarding concern, it will be reported through the agreed safeguarding mechanisms.

19. Preventing Radicalisation

Protecting learners from the risk of radicalisation is part of our wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting learners from other forms of harm and abuse.

Staff use their judgement in identifying learners who might be at risk of radicalisation and speak to the DSL/DDSL if concerned. The DSL/DDSL will act proportionately, which may include referral to the Channel programme or the Integrated Front Door.

All staff undertake Prevent awareness training.

20. Serious Violence and Exploitation

We are committed to success in learning for all learners as one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime. Our curriculum includes teaching conflict resolution skills and understanding risky situations.

Staff are trained to recognise early warning signs that learners may be at risk of involvement in gangs or serious violent crime and are aware of associated risks and measures to minimise them.

Staff should also be alert to child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation. A child may appear to cooperate with or benefit from an exploitative situation while still being a victim of abuse. Concerns are reported promptly to the DSL/DDSL.

21. Online Safeguarding

Online safety is an integral part of safeguarding. Children may experience harm through harmful content, unsafe contact, grooming, exploitation, cyberbullying, sexual harassment, image sharing, coercion, radicalisation, scams, manipulation and AI-generated or altered content.

Online safeguarding concerns are reported in the same way as face-to-face concerns. The fact that something happened outside The River Bourne Edge or outside provision hours does not remove our safeguarding responsibility where it affects the safety or wellbeing of a learner. Further detail is contained in the Online Safety Policy.

22. Off-Site Visits

We carry out a risk assessment prior to any off-site visit and designate the specific roles and responsibilities of each adult, whether employed or volunteering.

Where safeguarding concerns or allegations happen off-site, staff follow the procedures described in this policy and the current SVPP flowcharts as appropriate. Staff leading off-site activities must have access to the relevant safeguarding contact details and procedures.

23. Exceptional Operating Circumstances

If The River Bourne Edge is required to change the way provision is offered due to unforeseen circumstances, for example a pandemic or other major disruption, staff responsibilities to remain alert to signs and risks of abuse continue to apply.

In such circumstances the DSL will:

- work closely with social care, commissioning schools and partner agencies to support learners and identify children who may be at risk for the first time or benefit from additional support;
- use specific local and national safeguarding guidance relevant to the circumstances;
- ensure staff, learners and families are provided with written details of amended DSL arrangements, temporary changes to procedures for working with learners, amended reporting procedures, safeguarding training arrangements and timescales for temporary changes.

The curriculum offered during exceptional circumstances will continue to promote learners' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

24. Record Keeping and Information Sharing

The River Bourne Edge liaises with commissioning schools, Wiltshire Council and other relevant partner agencies to ensure safeguarding records are shared appropriately on transition, both when a learner joins and when a learner leaves.

For any learner dual-registered with another school or setting, the DSL liaises regularly with the DSL at that base to ensure information is shared in the best interests of the learner. This includes contextual safeguarding information about relationships young people form in neighbourhoods, schools and online.

The River Bourne Edge:

- keeps clear written or electronic records of all learner safeguarding and child protection concerns, including body maps where appropriate, discussions, decisions, reasons for decisions, actions taken and outcomes;
- ensures safeguarding and child protection records are stored securely with access restricted to authorised staff;
- ensures records incorporate the wishes and views of the learner where appropriate.

The DSL/DDSL acts in accordance with Information Sharing - Department for Education Advice for practitioners (2024) and Wiltshire Council record-keeping guidance, including file retention requirements.

We work in partnership with parents and carers and, in most situations, discuss initial concerns with them. However, information will not be shared where doing so would place a learner at increased risk of significant harm, prejudice the prevention/detection/prosecution of a serious crime, or lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about significant harm.

When we become aware that a child is being privately fostered, we remind the carer/parent of their legal duty to notify Wiltshire Children's Social Care and follow this up by contacting Children's Social Care directly.

25. Escalation of Concerns

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between colleagues and agencies.

Staff must be confident and able to professionally disagree and challenge decision-making as a legitimate part of professional responsibility to promote the best safeguarding practice. Staff are encouraged to press for reconsideration if they believe a decision to act or not act in response to a concern is wrong. The SVPP Case Resolution Protocol is used where necessary.

If we are on the receiving end of professional challenge, we see this as an opportunity to reflect on our decision-making.

26. Whistleblowing

All staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in The River Bourne Edge's safeguarding regime. Concerns should normally be raised with the Head.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue internally or feels genuine concerns are not being addressed, the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available on 0800 028 0285 (08:00-20:00 Monday to Friday) or help@nspcc.org.uk.

Further detail is contained in the Whistleblowing Policy.

27. Managing Allegations and Concerns About Adults

The River Bourne Edge follows the SVPP 'Allegations against adults' procedure and flowchart.

Where anyone has a concern about the behaviour of an adult who works or volunteers at the provision, including supply staff or contractors, they must report it immediately to the Head/appropriate senior leader, who will consider referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Where an allegation or concern relates to the Head/Director, it must be reported to another appropriate Director or directly to the LADO without informing the person who is the subject of the concern.

Concerns will be recorded in all instances, including where the threshold of harm has not been met. Low-level concerns will be managed in accordance with the Low-Level Concerns Policy.

All staff must remember that the welfare of the learner is paramount and must not delay raising concerns because of fear that reporting could jeopardise a colleague's career.

Any allegation will be dealt with fairly and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for the learner while supporting the person who is the subject of the allegation.

28. Induction

The welfare of all learners is of paramount importance. All staff and regular volunteers are informed of our safeguarding policy and procedures, including online safety, at induction.

Induction includes:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures;
- online safety;
- KCSiE update;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- the role and identities of the DSL and DDSLs;
- a plan of support appropriate to the role;
- confirmation of conduct expected through the Staff Behaviour Policy;
- opportunities to discuss issues or concerns about the role or responsibilities;
- confirmation of line management/mentor arrangements for addressing concerns about ability or suitability.

29. Safeguarding Training

Safeguarding training is provided for all staff and is updated at least every three years. Any member of staff not present at a whole-team session will complete the training requirement on return.

In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates as necessary and at least annually, for example through email, e-bulletins or staff meetings. All staff also receive online safety training, updated as necessary.

30. Advanced DSL/DDSL Training

The DSL/DDSLs undertake additional multi-agency training which is updated at least every two years. They also attend multi-agency courses relevant to the provision's needs and refresh their knowledge and skills at least annually, for example through e-bulletins or safeguarding networking events.

The DSL/DDSL will engage with Wiltshire safeguarding development opportunities, including an Integrated Front Door tour where available and appropriate.

31. Staff Support

Due to the demanding and often distressing nature of child protection work, we support staff by providing opportunities to talk through the challenges of this aspect of their role with a senior leader and seek further support as appropriate.

32. Monitoring and Review

Safeguarding is a standing agenda item within relevant staff and leadership meetings. The effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, training, record keeping, safer recruitment and safeguarding practice is monitored by senior leadership.

This policy is reviewed annually or earlier where required by changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures or the needs of the provision.

33. Related Legislation and Key Documents

- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Information Sharing - DfE Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2024)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (2018)
- Teachers' Standards
- Children Missing Education (2026)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2026)
- Prevent Duty Guidance (2023)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (SVPP) procedures
- Alternative Provision - Statutory guidance 2013