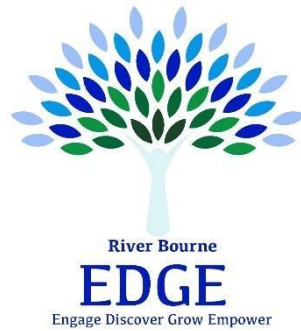




River Bourne Edge Alternative Provision

Health and Safety Policy

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

Part 1 – Statement of Intent, Health & Safety Culture, Roles & Responsibilities

1. Statement of Intent

At **The River Bourne Edge**, the health, safety and wellbeing of our students, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors is our highest priority.

As an Alternative Provision delivering education across the River Bourne Community Farm site, we recognise that our learning environment is very different from that of a traditional school. Our students learn in classrooms, workshops, kitchens, woodland areas, gardens, around farm animals and within the wider community. These experiences are an essential part of our curriculum and provide opportunities for personal growth, independence, confidence and achievement.

We believe that learning should be active, engaging and appropriately challenging. Rather than eliminating all risk, we aim to identify potential hazards, assess the level of risk and implement sensible control measures that allow students to participate safely in meaningful learning experiences.

Health and safety is embedded within our culture. It is not viewed simply as a legal requirement, but as an essential part of providing high-quality education and safeguarding every member of our community.

The River Bourne Edge is committed to:

- Providing a safe, healthy and supportive learning and working environment.
- Complying with all relevant health and safety legislation.
- Promoting a positive health and safety culture where everyone understands their responsibilities.
- Ensuring risks are assessed, managed and reviewed appropriately.
- Providing suitable information, instruction, supervision and training.
- Encouraging the reporting of hazards, accidents, incidents and near misses.
- Continually reviewing and improving our health and safety arrangements.

This policy applies to all educational activities delivered by The River Bourne Edge, whether on the River Bourne Community Farm site or at any off-site location used as part of our curriculum.

2. Our Health and Safety Culture

At The River Bourne Edge, health and safety is everyone's responsibility.

Creating a safe environment is not achieved through policies alone but through the daily decisions made by every member of staff. We expect everyone to actively contribute to maintaining a safe, supportive and respectful learning environment.

Our approach reflects the values of The River Bourne Edge.

We are:

- **Restorative** – learning from mistakes rather than allocating blame.
- **Relational** – recognising that positive relationships help keep everyone safe.
- **Trauma-informed** – understanding that many of our students require consistency, calmness and predictable routines.
- **Proactive** – identifying and managing risks before incidents occur.
- **Reflective** – continually reviewing our practice to improve safety.

We encourage staff to use professional judgement every day through **dynamic risk assessment**.

This means continually observing changes in:

- student presentation
- behaviour
- weather conditions
- learning environments
- equipment
- staffing levels
- animal welfare
- any other factors that may affect safety.

Where risks increase beyond an acceptable level, staff are expected to modify or stop the activity until it is safe to continue.

We believe that good health and safety should enable learning rather than restrict it.

3. Legal Responsibilities

The River Bourne Edge recognises its duties under current health and safety legislation, including but not limited to:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version)

The River Bourne Edge will ensure that all health and safety arrangements are reviewed regularly and updated to reflect changes in legislation, guidance or operational practice.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Directors

The Directors hold overall responsibility for ensuring effective health and safety management throughout The River Bourne Edge.

They will:

- Provide strategic leadership for health and safety.
- Ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place.
- Allocate sufficient resources to maintain safe working practices.
- Monitor health and safety performance.
- Ensure statutory inspections and servicing are completed.
- Review serious incidents and implement lessons learned.
- Promote a positive health and safety culture throughout the organisation.

Head of Provision

The Head of Provision has responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy.

This includes:

- Ensuring health and safety procedures are followed.
- Maintaining appropriate risk assessments.
- Monitoring safe practice across all educational activities.
- Investigating accidents and incidents.
- Ensuring appropriate supervision of students.
- Identifying training needs.
- Liaising with external agencies where necessary.
- Reporting significant health and safety matters to the Directors.

Managers and Team Leaders

Managers and Team Leaders are responsible for promoting safe working practices within their areas of responsibility.

They will:

- Lead by example.
- Monitor staff practice.
- Ensure staff understand risk assessments.
- Carry out dynamic risk assessments during activities.
- Report hazards promptly.
- Ensure equipment remains safe to use.
- Support staff following incidents.
- Escalate concerns where appropriate.

Staff and Volunteers

Every member of staff and volunteer has a personal responsibility to protect their own health and safety and that of others.

They are expected to:

- Follow this policy and associated procedures.
- Take reasonable care of themselves and others.
- Read and follow relevant risk assessments.
- Use equipment safely.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment where required.
- Report hazards immediately.
- Record accidents, incidents and near misses.
- Challenge unsafe practice professionally.
- Stop activities if they believe safety has been compromised.

Health and safety is an integral part of everyone's role and should be considered in every activity undertaken.

Students

Students are encouraged to take an active role in maintaining a safe learning environment appropriate to their age, understanding and individual needs.

Students are expected to:

- Follow staff instructions.
- Treat equipment responsibly.
- Respect safety rules.
- Report hazards or concerns to staff.
- Use protective equipment when instructed.
- Behave in a manner that helps keep themselves and others safe.

Supporting students to understand and manage risk is an important part of preparing them for adulthood and independent living.

Visitors and Contractors

All visitors and contractors must:

- Report to reception on arrival.
- Sign in and out.
- Follow site safety procedures.
- Comply with instructions from staff.
- Report any hazards immediately.
- Ensure that any work carried out does not place students, staff or visitors at unnecessary risk.

Contractors must provide appropriate evidence of competence, insurance and relevant risk assessments where required.

Part 2 – Managing Risk and Safe Learning Environments

5. Managing Risk

The River Bourne Edge is committed to creating a learning environment where students can safely experience challenge, develop independence and take part in meaningful practical learning.

We recognise that many of our activities naturally involve a degree of risk. Our approach is not to eliminate all risk, but to identify hazards, assess the likelihood of harm and implement sensible control measures that allow learning to continue safely.

Health and safety is therefore embedded within everyday practice rather than viewed as a separate process.

Risk Assessments

Suitable and sufficient written risk assessments are completed for:

- Educational environments
- Farm activities
- Animal handling
- Woodland learning
- Gardening and horticulture

- Cooking and food preparation
- Woodwork and practical workshops
- Educational visits
- Off-site activities
- Manual handling tasks
- Lone working
- Individual students where additional risks have been identified.

Risk assessments are reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following an accident or near miss.
- When legislation changes.
- Following significant changes to activities or equipment.
- Whenever staff identify that an assessment no longer reflects current practice.

Staff are expected to be familiar with the risk assessments relevant to their role and follow the agreed control measures at all times.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

While written risk assessments provide the foundation for safe practice, many of our learning activities require staff to continually assess changing situations.

Dynamic risk assessment is an essential part of working at The River Bourne Edge.

Throughout each session staff should consider factors including:

- Student behaviour and emotional presentation.
- Individual medical needs.
- Weather conditions.
- Ground conditions.
- Animal behaviour and welfare.
- Equipment condition.
- Staffing levels.
- Visitor presence.
- Environmental changes.
- Any unforeseen hazards.

Where risks increase beyond an acceptable level, staff must:

- Adapt the activity.
- Increase supervision.
- Introduce additional control measures.
- Move to an alternative activity.
- Stop the activity altogether if necessary.

Staff will always be supported in making decisions that prioritise safety.

6. Safe Learning Environments

Learning at The River Bourne Edge takes place across a variety of indoor and outdoor environments. Each presents different opportunities and hazards.

All learning areas are expected to be maintained to a safe standard and checked regularly before use.

Indoor Learning Areas

Teaching rooms, intervention spaces, workshops and communal areas should always:

- Be clean and tidy.
- Have clear walkways and fire exits.
- Store equipment safely.
- Remove slip and trip hazards promptly.
- Be appropriately ventilated.
- Be supervised whenever students are present.

Furniture and equipment should only be used for their intended purpose.

Defective equipment must be removed from use immediately and reported.

Outdoor Learning Areas

Outdoor learning forms an important part of The River Bourne Edge curriculum.

Before activities begin, staff should consider:

- Weather conditions.
- Ground surfaces.
- Visibility.
- Temperature.
- Student clothing and footwear.
- Staffing ratios.
- Access to drinking water.
- Emergency access.

Activities should be adapted or postponed where environmental conditions increase the level of risk.

Farm-Based Learning

Learning on the farm provides valuable educational experiences but requires careful planning and supervision.

Students will only take part in farm activities when:

- Appropriate supervision is available.
- Staff are confident the activity can be undertaken safely.
- Relevant risk assessments have been considered.
- Students have received appropriate instructions.
- Suitable clothing and footwear are worn.

Students will not be expected to undertake tasks beyond their level of understanding, confidence or physical ability.

Learning opportunities should be progressive, allowing students to develop confidence safely over time.

Animal Welfare and Animal Handling

Animals play an important role within our curriculum and contribute significantly to student wellbeing and engagement.

The welfare of both students and animals is equally important.

Staff will ensure:

- Animals are handled appropriately.
- Students receive clear guidance before contact.
- Students are supervised at all times when handling animals.
- Hand washing takes place after contact.
- Students do not enter animal areas without permission.
- Any aggressive or distressed animal is removed from activities.
- Activities are adapted if animal welfare may be compromised.

Where individual students present increased risks around animals, appropriate control measures or alternative activities will be provided.

Woodland Learning

Woodland activities provide opportunities to develop resilience, teamwork and practical skills.

Staff will ensure:

- Learning areas are checked before use.
- Weather conditions are suitable.
- Natural hazards are identified.
- Students understand agreed boundaries.
- Appropriate supervision is maintained.
- Emergency communication is available where appropriate.

Seasonal hazards such as high winds, falling branches or extreme weather will always be considered.

Gardening and Horticulture

Students regularly participate in gardening activities using a range of hand tools and equipment.

Staff will ensure:

- Tools are suitable for the age and ability of students.
- Equipment is checked before use.
- Students receive appropriate instruction.
- PPE is provided where necessary.
- Unsafe equipment is removed immediately.

Students must never use equipment unless authorised and supervised.

Cooking Activities

Cooking provides valuable life skills and independence.

Staff will ensure:

- Food hygiene standards are maintained.
- Students wash hands before food preparation.
- Allergies and dietary requirements are known.
- Hot equipment is used safely.
- Sharp utensils are supervised.
- Spillages are dealt with immediately.

Students should work at a pace appropriate to their ability.

Practical Workshops and Woodwork

Practical activities provide opportunities to develop vocational skills while learning safe working practices.

Only trained members of staff may supervise practical workshop activities.

Staff will ensure:

- Equipment is maintained.
- Appropriate PPE is worn.
- Students receive demonstrations before use.
- Close supervision is maintained.
- Defective tools are removed immediately.
- Work areas remain tidy throughout activities.

Power tools may only be used where authorised, risk assessed and supervised by appropriately trained staff.

Educational Visits and Community Learning

Educational visits are an important extension of classroom learning.

Before any visit staff will ensure:

- Appropriate planning has been completed.
- Risks have been assessed.
- Staffing ratios are appropriate.
- Medical needs have been considered.
- Emergency arrangements are in place.
- Parents and referring schools receive appropriate information where necessary.

The same expectations for behaviour, safeguarding and supervision apply off-site as they do on site.

7. Monitoring the Learning Environment

Health and safety is monitored continuously through:

- Daily visual checks.
- Dynamic risk assessment.
- Regular site inspections.
- Equipment checks.
- Staff observations.
- Accident analysis.
- Student feedback.
- Maintenance reporting.

Any member of staff identifying a hazard has a responsibility to take immediate action where safe to do so or report it without delay.

Part 3 – Safe Working Practices and Emergency Procedures

8. First Aid and Medical Needs

The River Bourne Edge is committed to ensuring that prompt and appropriate first aid is available whenever students, staff, volunteers or visitors require assistance.

Adequate numbers of trained First Aiders will be available during operational hours and during educational visits. First aid provision will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects the needs of the provision.

First aid equipment will:

- Be easily accessible.
- Be regularly checked and replenished.
- Be available in all key learning areas.
- Be taken on all off-site visits.

Only staff with appropriate first aid training should administer first aid within the limits of their training.

Student Medical Needs

Information regarding medical conditions, allergies and medication requirements will be obtained before a student begins their placement.

Where required:

- Individual Healthcare Plans will be developed.
- Relevant staff will be informed of medical needs.
- Emergency medication will be readily accessible.
- Appropriate training will be provided where specialist medical procedures are required.

Medication will only be administered in accordance with The River Bourne Edge Medication Policy.

All medication administered will be recorded appropriately.

Illness During the School Day

Where a student becomes unwell:

- A member of staff will assess the situation.
- Appropriate first aid will be provided if necessary.
- Parents, carers or the referring school will be contacted where appropriate.
- Emergency services will be contacted immediately if required.

Students who are too unwell to participate safely will not remain in activities.

9. Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures

The River Bourne Edge aims to ensure that everyone on site can respond safely and effectively in the event of an emergency.

Separate emergency procedures are maintained for:

- Fire
- Medical emergencies
- Missing students
- Severe weather
- Lockdown
- Gas or utility failures
- Other major incidents

All staff will receive emergency procedure information during induction and regular refresher training.

Fire Safety

All staff are expected to:

- Know the location of fire exits.
- Know the assembly point.
- Keep escape routes clear.
- Report fire hazards immediately.
- Participate in fire drills.
- Follow evacuation procedures without delay.

Fire alarms, extinguishers and emergency lighting will be inspected and maintained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Fire risk assessments will be reviewed annually or sooner if significant changes occur.

Emergency Evacuation

During an evacuation staff will:

- Remain calm.
- Supervise students at all times.
- Escort students safely to the assembly point.
- Conduct a register.
- Report missing persons immediately.
- Await further instruction before re-entering buildings.

Students requiring additional support during an evacuation will have appropriate arrangements in place.

10. Accident, Incident and Near Miss Reporting

The River Bourne Edge believes that learning from accidents and near misses is an essential part of maintaining a safe environment.

All accidents, incidents and near misses involving students, staff, volunteers or visitors must be:

- Reported immediately.
- Recorded using the appropriate reporting system.
- Investigated where appropriate.
- Reviewed to identify learning and improvements.

Reporting near misses is actively encouraged as they often highlight hazards before injuries occur.

Investigation

Significant incidents will be investigated by an appropriate member of the leadership team.

Investigations will seek to identify:

- What happened.
- Why it happened.
- Whether procedures were followed.
- Whether further control measures are required.
- Any lessons that can improve future practice.

The purpose of investigations is to improve safety rather than allocate blame.

RIDDOR

Where incidents meet the reporting criteria under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), reports will be submitted to the Health and Safety Executive within the required timescales.

11. Safe Use of Equipment

All equipment used by staff or students must be:

- Suitable for its intended purpose.
- Maintained appropriately.
- Used in accordance with manufacturer's guidance.
- Regularly inspected.
- Removed from use immediately if defective.

Staff should never attempt repairs unless authorised and competent to do so.

Students may only use equipment appropriate to their age, ability and level of supervision.

Electrical Safety

Electrical safety is essential across all learning environments.

The River Bourne Edge will ensure:

- Portable electrical equipment is inspected and tested where required.
- Damaged electrical equipment is removed from use immediately.
- Extension leads are used safely.
- Electrical cupboards remain secure.
- Only competent persons carry out repairs or installations.

Staff should report damaged plugs, cables or equipment immediately.

12. Manual Handling

Staff should avoid unnecessary manual handling wherever possible.

Where lifting or moving cannot be avoided:

- Suitable equipment should be used where available.
- Correct lifting techniques should be followed.
- Assistance should be sought where necessary.
- Individual capability should always be considered.

Students should only participate in manual handling activities appropriate to their age and ability.

13. Hazardous Substances (COSHH)

Hazardous substances include cleaning chemicals, fuels, paints, disinfectants and other materials that could present a risk to health.

The River Bourne Edge will ensure:

- COSHH assessments are completed where required.
- Hazardous substances are securely stored.
- Appropriate PPE is available.
- Staff receive appropriate instruction before use.
- Students only use hazardous substances under direct supervision.

Products should always be used in accordance with manufacturer guidance.

14. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Where risks cannot be adequately controlled through other measures, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment will be provided.

Examples include:

- Protective gloves.
- Eye protection.
- Hearing protection.
- Safety footwear.
- Protective clothing.
- Disposable aprons.

Staff are responsible for ensuring PPE is worn whenever required and is maintained in good condition.

15. Lone Working

There may be occasions when staff work alone before or after operational hours or while undertaking specific duties.

Where lone working takes place:

- Managers should be aware of the arrangements.
- Staff should maintain appropriate communication.
- Mobile phones should be available where appropriate.
- Higher-risk tasks should not be undertaken alone.
- Staff should withdraw from situations where they feel unsafe.

Staff safety should never be compromised.

16. Visitors and Contractors

The River Bourne Edge welcomes visitors while recognising the importance of maintaining a secure and safe environment.

All visitors must:

- Report to reception.
- Sign in and out.
- Wear visitor identification where appropriate.
- Follow staff instructions.
- Remain accompanied unless authorised otherwise.

Contractors must:

- Provide appropriate evidence of competence where required.
- Follow agreed site procedures.
- Complete relevant risk assessments where appropriate.
- Ensure work does not compromise student safety.

17. Housekeeping and Site Standards

Maintaining a tidy environment significantly reduces the likelihood of accidents.

All staff share responsibility for ensuring that:

- Walkways remain clear.
- Fire exits remain unobstructed.
- Spillages are cleaned promptly.
- Equipment is stored safely.
- Waste is disposed of appropriately.
- Learning environments remain organised.

Any defects to buildings, equipment or outdoor areas should be reported promptly.

18. Staff Wellbeing

The River Bourne Edge recognises that staff wellbeing contributes directly to health and safety.

We are committed to promoting a working environment where staff feel:

- Safe.
- Valued.
- Supported.
- Listened to.
- Able to raise concerns without fear.

Managers will work proactively with staff to identify reasonable adjustments where appropriate and support wellbeing through effective communication, supervision and access to relevant support.

Part 4 – Monitoring, Training and Continuous Improvement

19. Health and Safety Training

The River Bourne Edge recognises that effective health and safety arrangements rely on knowledgeable, confident and well-trained staff.

All employees and volunteers will receive appropriate health and safety training relevant to their role.

Training will be provided:

- During induction.
- When an employee changes role or responsibilities.
- Before new equipment or activities are introduced.
- Following changes to legislation or guidance.
- Following significant incidents where learning has been identified.
- As part of ongoing professional development.

Training may include:

- General Health and Safety
- Safeguarding
- Fire Safety
- First Aid
- Manual Handling
- COSHH Awareness
- Risk Assessment
- Dynamic Risk Assessment
- Food Hygiene
- Animal Handling
- Educational Visits
- Positive Behaviour Support
- Trauma-Informed Practice

Managers will maintain records of completed training and identify refresher training where required.

Staff are expected to participate fully in all mandatory training and apply their learning within daily practice.

20. Monitoring Health and Safety

Health and safety is monitored continuously rather than solely through annual reviews.

The River Bourne Edge will monitor health and safety through:

- Daily observations by staff.
- Routine site inspections.
- Equipment inspections.
- Review of accident and near miss records.
- Review of behaviour incidents where safety has been affected.
- Review of risk assessments.
- Feedback from staff, students and visitors.
- Regular leadership monitoring.

Monitoring enables us to identify trends, reduce risk and continually improve the safety of our provision.

Where concerns are identified, appropriate action plans will be developed and monitored until completed.

21. Staff Consultation

The River Bourne Edge believes that health and safety is most effective when everyone contributes.

Staff are encouraged to:

- Report hazards immediately.
- Suggest improvements.
- Raise concerns openly.
- Share examples of good practice.
- Contribute to the review of risk assessments.
- Participate in discussions following incidents.

No member of staff will be criticised for raising genuine health and safety concerns.

Open communication helps us create a safer environment for everyone.

22. Learning from Incidents

Whenever accidents, incidents or near misses occur, we will take the opportunity to learn and improve.

Following significant incidents we will consider:

- Whether existing risk assessments remain suitable.
- Whether additional staff training is required.
- Whether procedures need revising.
- Whether environmental improvements can reduce future risk.
- Whether students require additional support or supervision.

Where appropriate, lessons learned will be shared with staff to strengthen future practice.

Our aim is continual improvement rather than assigning blame.

23. Policy Review

This policy will be formally reviewed at least annually.

It will also be reviewed sooner if:

- Legislation changes.
- There are significant changes to the organisation.
- New learning environments are introduced.
- Serious accidents or incidents occur.
- Monitoring identifies the need for change.
- Best practice guidance changes.

The Directors retain overall responsibility for ensuring this policy remains effective, legally compliant and reflects the values of The River Bourne Edge.

24. Related Policies and Documents

This Health and Safety Policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- Overall Risk Assessment
- Fire Safety Procedures
- First Aid Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Relationships Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Medication Policy
- Critical Incident Procedures

- Manual Handling Guidance
- COSHH Assessments
- Individual Activity Risk Assessments
- Individual Student Risk Assessments (where applicable)

Together these documents form The River Bourne Edge's health and safety management system.

25. Equality and Inclusion

The River Bourne Edge is committed to ensuring that health and safety arrangements are inclusive and meet the needs of all members of our community.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to ensure that students, staff and visitors with disabilities, medical needs or additional requirements can participate safely in learning and work.

Risk assessments will take account of individual needs while promoting independence wherever possible.

26. Policy Summary

At The River Bourne Edge, health and safety is not simply about preventing accidents.

It is about creating an environment where students feel secure, staff feel supported and everyone can learn and work with confidence.

Our approach reflects the values that underpin everything we do:

- We build positive relationships.
- We recognise individual needs.
- We encourage challenge through carefully managed risk.
- We learn from experience.
- We work together to keep everyone safe.

Every member of our community has a role in maintaining these standards.

Statement of Commitment

The Directors and Leadership Team of The River Bourne Edge are committed to maintaining the highest standards of health, safety and wellbeing across all aspects of our provision.

Through effective leadership, sensible risk management and a culture of shared responsibility, we aim to provide a safe, welcoming and inspiring environment where every young person can **Engage, Discover, Grow and Empower**.

Health and safety is central to achieving our mission and will remain a priority in every decision we make.