

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

### Riverbank Academy

January 2021

**Policy last reviewed: January 2021**

**Reviewed by:** Jayne Heavey

**Agreed by governors:** pending

**Shared with staff:** pending

**Head Teacher/Principal:** David Lisowski

**Designated Safeguarding Lead:** Jayne Heavey

**Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/s:** Gaynor Clarke

*If the DSL is not on site because of operational challenges, the following cover arrangements are in place:*

- **a trained DSL (or deputy) from the school will be available via e mail: [jheavey@riverbankacademy.org.uk](mailto:jheavey@riverbankacademy.org.uk)**

- *When DSL (or DDSL) is not on site, a senior leader will take responsibility for coordinating safeguarding on site.*

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**Telephone:** 024 76453121

**Named Governor for Safeguarding: Rakesh Shama**

**Chair of Governors: Rakesh Shama**

**Vice Chair of Governors: Michael Berry**

**Local Authority designated officer: Mark Goddard**

Telephone number: 02476 975 483

**Designated Lead for Looked After and Previously Looked-After Children:**

**Jayne Heavey**

**Head of the Virtual School: Jim Horgan**

**Email address:** [virtualschool@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@coventry.gov.uk)

Policy Addendum reviewed remotely and agreed by governors on: **Date**

## 1 Introduction

1.1. This policy is an addendum to the school's main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and is intended for use during the COVID-19 emergency period only.

1.2 We continue to recognise that safeguarding and child protection is an essential part of our duty of care to all students and that we have a responsibility to safeguard children, whether they are on-site or staying at home. We understand that safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare of all children is everyone's responsibility and everyone has a role to play in protecting children. We continue to promote a culture of vigilance, where staff and volunteers act immediately if they have safeguarding concerns about a child. We recognise that our school is part of a wider safeguarding system for children and work closely with other agencies to promote the welfare of children. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and will consider the wishes of, and at all times, what is in the best interests of each child.

1.3 Due to the nature of the emergency we are facing and the changing threat from COVID-19, this policy is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that the school is compliant with;

- All relevant legislation and statutory guidance;
- government guidance relating to the COVID-19 outbreak; and
- guidance from the Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership (the Local Authority, the local clinical commissioning group and the chief office of police).

1.3 All staff will be made aware of this policy and updated regularly on further developments.

1.4 Further information about the government's approach to COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

1.5 The purpose of this policy is to;

- Promote safeguarding and child protection and demonstrate the school's commitment to keeping children safe whilst operating under emergency measures related to COVID-19;
- Provide all members of staff with the information required to meet their safeguarding duty and protect children from harm during this time;
- Provide stakeholders with clear information relating to the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures during the COVID-19 outbreak; and
- Ensure that children are protected from maltreatment or harm.

1.5 *Riverbank* is committed to the following principles at all times;

- All children have the right to be protected from harm;
- The best interests of children will always continue to come first;
- All staff are responsible for keeping children safe and have a responsibility to act if they think a child is at risk of harm;
- If anyone in school has a safeguarding concern about any child they should continue to follow usual procedures and must act and act immediately;
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy Safeguarding Lead should be available; and
- Working with other agencies (such as Children's Services and the Virtual School) is essential to promote safeguarding and protect children from harm.

1.6 We continue to be subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 in the exercise of their functions to have "due regard" to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and will refer to appropriate services if we are concerned a child is being radicalised.

1.7 We continue to fulfil our duties under Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.

## **1.8 Scope**

- This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of *the school*. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned unless otherwise stated.
- This policy applies to all staff, whether working on-site or at home.

## **2 Context**

2.1 *Riverbank* adheres to government guidance.

2.2 We recognise that the characteristics of the cohort in *Riverbank* and will continue to offer face-to-face provision for all students, where appropriate.

All other pupils and students will have access to remote education. Pupils and students who are self-isolating should not attend school or college. Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) are also advised not to attend whilst shielding is in place.

2.3 The school adheres to government guidance on 'critical workers'. For further information relating to critical workers, see guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

2.4 The school remains open for children who are deemed to be vulnerable, as per government guidance. The school has given careful consideration to which children need to continue to attend school, in order to ensure children are safe and to minimise the spread of COVID-19.

2.5 Each child has been considered on a case-by-case basis and an assessment of risk has been made, with relevant external agencies, parents and the Local Authority, to decide if a child should be on site or not. The school considers all children to be vulnerable and may need to attend, however further consideration has been given to :

- Children on Child Protection Plans;
- Children in Need;
- Looked-After or Previously Looked-After; and
- Children at risk of harm

2.6 Children other than those above may be considered vulnerable and some children will become vulnerable during the time that the school is closed. The school will continually review which children will attend school, in line with local and governmental guidance.

2.7 Additional support may be put in place to safeguard;

- Children vulnerable to CE/Contextual safeguarding issues and those in receipt of early help; and
- Children who are homeless/living in temporary accommodation, refugees and asylum seekers and young carers.

2.7 There is an expectation that children who have a social worker will continue to attend school, unless they have an underlying health condition that will put them at severe risk.

2.8 Where parents of the children referred to in paragraph 2.7 are concerned about the risk of the child contracting COVID-19, Riverbank in partnership with the social worker will talk through these anxieties with the parent/carer following the advice set out by Public Health England.

2.9 The school will follow government guidance to support children who are usually in receipt of free school meals. Further information can be found on this here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools>

2.10 Some children will have existing vulnerabilities and will not attend school. In the case of these children, the school will provide a bespoke package of welfare checks including regular phone calls, video links, door step visits.

2.11 All children (regardless of vulnerability) will be contacted every week.

### **3 Local Safeguarding Arrangements**

3.1 The school will ensure that it is aware of any changes to local safeguarding arrangements through existing channels of communication with the Local Authority and the wider Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership.

3.2 The school continues to operate under Coventry Safeguarding Partnership policies and continues to use the '[Right Help Right Time](#)' guidance when considering if children require additional support or statutory intervention.

3.3 This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes in local safeguarding arrangements.

## **4 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 The Governing Body and/or Proprietors**

4.1.1 The governing body continues to monitor the school during this period of emergency closure. Governors will continue to have oversight of leadership in the school. Governor meetings will be carried out remotely.

### **4.2 The Role of the Headteacher**

#### **4.2.1 The headteacher will;**

- Ensure that this policy is regularly updated in line with evolving government and local guidance relating to COVID-19;
- Ensure that this policy and associated procedures are adhered to by all staff;
- Ensure that all adults coming into contact with children at school have been subject to the appropriate safer recruitment checks;
- Respond to allegations of abuse against all other members of staff; and
- Ensure that staff on-site and off-site have regularly updated training to ensure that they are aware of local safeguarding arrangements.

**4.2.2** In the event that the headteacher is unavailable either on-site or remotely, the above responsibilities will be completed by the Deputy Head Teacher and the SLT.

### **4.3 The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

4.3.1 The role of the DSL is outlined in the main school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2020\)](#).

4.3.2 In addition to their usual duties, the DSL will also have regard to the additional mental health issues that pupils on-site may be experiencing as a result of COVID-19 and provide/arrange support for pupils as necessary.

4.3.3 Wherever possible, a trained DSL (or deputy DSL) will be available on site. Where this is not possible due to staff self-isolation, a trained DSL (or deputy DSL) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video.

4.3.4 In the event that the DSL and the DSL/s are unable to work remotely due to illness, an appropriate senior leader will take responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site. This could include, but is not limited to, updating and managing access to safeguarding and child protection files and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at Riverbank Information will be passed to the DSL as soon as practicably possible.

4.3.5 Arrangements for contacting the DSL/DDSs will be shared with staff before 9am each day, as well as any relevant safeguarding and child protection updates and training.

4.3.6 The government has acknowledged that DSL refresher training is very unlikely to take place during this emergency. All DSLs and DDSs that have previously been trained will continue to be classed as DSLs even if they miss their refresher training, in line with current government guidance. All DSLs and DDSs will keep up to date with the latest safeguarding information and guidance through via e-bulletins, Local Authority e-bulletins and taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments. Where possible DSL will receive online Level 3 training.

#### **4.4 The Role & Responsibilities of all Staff within School**

4.4.1 All staff, whether on-site or working from home, will;

- continue to operate under the principles of the main school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the staff Code of Conduct, all relevant legislation and statutory guidance and continue to have particular regard to [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2020\)](#);
- will continue to promote a culture of vigilance and refer all safeguarding concerns to the appropriate person immediately;
- adhere to all government, local and school advice relating to hygiene, response to COVID-19 symptoms and self-isolation;
- seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are unsure; and
- All teachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (Teaching Standards, 2012).

### **5 Responding to signs of abuse**

5.1 Information relating to types of abuse and signs and symptoms of abuse can be found in Riverbank's main safeguarding and child protection policy and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#).

5.2 All staff and volunteers will continue to be alert to indicators of abuse and will report any concerns to the appropriate member of staff immediately.

5.3 If a member of staff, parent/carer or member of the public is concerned about a child's welfare (whether they are attending school or not), they should report it to the designated safeguarding lead as soon as possible. If the designated safeguarding lead is not available, it should be reported to the deputy safeguarding lead without delay. Although any member of staff can make a referral to Children's Social Care, where possible there should be a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead via telephone or online video call, if they are working from home. If there is no DSL available, concerns should be reported to the member of SLT who is on site. All members of SLT have up to date Level 3 Safeguarding training.

5.4 A significant number children are not currently attending school. The school recognise that children who are not attending school may need to make a disclosure or want to seek help from a trusted member of staff. The school will ensure weekly contact with the student where possible.

5.5 If anyone other than the Designated Safeguarding Lead makes a referral to children's social care or to the police, they should inform the DSL as soon as possible.

5.6 If the school is concerned that a child is at risk of significant harm, we will seek advice from Coventry's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and make a referral to this service if necessary. Coventry's MASH continues to be fully functional in terms of its safeguarding responsibilities.

5.7 Referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub can and should still be made for children at risk of harm using the online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

**MASH Telephone number:** 02476 788 555

**MASH online referral form:** <http://www.coventry.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren>

**Out of hours Emergency Duty Team:** 02476 832 222

**Prevent/Channel Referrals:** Refer to MASH ([mash@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:mash@coventry.gov.uk)) and to [CTU\\_GATEWAY@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk](mailto:CTU_GATEWAY@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk)

5.8 The school will continue to receive Operation Encompass reports as long as the police have capacity to offer this service. The school will risk assess each report on a case-by-case basis and continue to operate as usual in response to reports, unless instructed otherwise by the police or Local Authority. This information will be recorded on the child's safeguarding and child protection record as usual. If a child is attending a partner school or hub, this information will be passed to the DSL at the host school. This is constantly under review and the school is being regularly updated on any changes by the local Operation Encompass Co-ordinator.

5.9 All services are under increased pressure during this period of emergency. However, the school recognises that safeguarding continues to be of paramount importance and will work with other agencies in order to ensure children are safe. If a child's situation does not appear to be improving following a referral, the school may re-refer the child. We will also consider using the [Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership's Escalation and Resolution of Professional Disagreements policy](#) to ensure that our concerns have been addressed and that the situation improves for the child.

## 6 Peer on Peer Abuse

6.1 Riverbank understands that both adults and other children can perpetrate abuse, and peer on peer abuse is taken very seriously. Peer on peer abuse can include bullying, cyber-bullying, physical abuse, sexting, sexual violence and/or harassment, up skirting, and initiation/hazing ceremonies. The school recognise that safeguarding issues can manifest as peer on peer abuse.

6.2 During this time, staff will continue to be vigilant in reporting any concerns relating to peer on peer abuse to the DSL.

6.4 The school's revised approach to peer on peer abuse is informed by the principles set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

## 7 Online Safety

7.1 The school recognises that children both on-site and off-site are vulnerable to abuse and radicalisation online. Children who are at home may be spending more time online and this increases their vulnerability.

7.2 *Riverbank recognises that additional safeguarding arrangements are required to ensure that children are safe online at this time.*

7.3 Governors will review arrangements to ensure that they continue to be appropriate.

7.4 Online activity in school will continued to be monitored through our usual IT monitoring systems. Refer to e safety policy.

7.5 Children who are not attending school have access to the home learning page on the website. This has been developed for the Riverbank website to provide families with up to date information on how to keep students safe on line as well as our normal live feeds on the parents information section of our website.

7.6 *The school is using technology to deliver learning to pupils who are at home. In order to ensure that children are safe when learning online, the school have;*

- *Developed online safety guidance.*
- *Trained staff involved on appropriate use of IT, provided pupils with information sheets, acceptable use agreements etc.*
- *Include that parents have been advised on suitable websites for children and the risks of using online unknown tutors etc once you have done this.*

7.7 *We have reviewed the staff Code of Conduct/remote learning policy and information sharing policy to reflect the current change in circumstances and increased use of technology.*

7.8 *Staff have received training on the new and updated Code of Conduct/remote learning policy and top tips for best practice, either on-site or remotely.*

7.9 *A list of useful sources of information relating to online safety is including in Appendix B of this policy.*

## 8 Record-keeping

8.1 A written record of all safeguarding and/or child protection concerns, discussions and decisions made will continue to be kept in individual children's files. This will be separate from the main school file and will only be accessed by the relevant safeguarding staff.

**8.2 *The school keeps all safeguarding files electronically, using a system called CPOMs.***

## 9 Attendance

9.1 The school adheres to [all](#) government guidance, which states that parents should keep their children at home, wherever possible, and that schools, colleges and early years settings should remain open only for children of critical workers and those deemed to be vulnerable, as outlined in Section 2 of this policy. [The schools also adhere to government guidance regarding class sizes when learning on-site.](#)

9.2 As such, Riverbank will not be following our usual attendance procedures and non-attendance will not be managed in the way that it normally would and children should not attend [unless there is an agreement with the school.](#)

9.3 The school will work with families and social workers to agree whether children should attend school or not. If it is agreed that a child should attend and they do not, the school will follow this up with parents/carers.

9.4 The school will follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their children and the children subsequently do not attend.

9.5 If children who should be attending school develop symptoms, they will be asked to remain at home. In the event that this happens, [we will conduct safe and well telephone calls on at least a weekly basis.](#)

9.6 The school will take the opportunity when communicating with parents and carers to confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional emergency contact numbers where they are available.

9.7 In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at the school, or discontinues, we will notify their social worker.

9.8 Some children may have existing vulnerabilities but will not attend school (those with underlying health conditions, for example). [In this case, we will conduct safe and well telephone calls on at least a weekly basis.](#)

9.9 The school will [continue to record pupil daily attendance using the SIMS system already in place. Code X will be used for noneligible children. As vulnerable children are still expected to attend school full time, they will not be marked Code X if absent.](#)

9.10 [In cases whereby individuals who are self-isolating but are also considered vulnerable, schools will keep in contact with these children until they are able to return to school site.](#)

9.11 Schools will also work closely with parents to ensure their child is engaging well with their remote education.

## 12 Safer Recruitment

12.1 Riverbank is committed to providing children with a safe environment. We take safer recruitment very seriously and all staff and volunteers are subject to the necessary checks.

12.2 There are no circumstances in which a child or children will be unsupervised with an adult who has not been subject to all necessary safer recruitment checks. Any new members of staff, new volunteers or existing volunteers taking on new roles will be subject to all necessary safer recruitment check and this will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

12.3 Our safer recruitment practices strictly adhere to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019).

12.4 In the unlikely event a member of staff or volunteer with a DBS check from a childcare setting, another school or another college temporarily moves to Riverbank a risk assessment will be completed to ascertain if a new DBS check is required before they work in regulated activity. The school will follow guidance set out in [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers \(27<sup>th</sup> March 2020\)](#).

12.6 Any members of staff or volunteers transferring from another childcare or education setting will undergo induction training and we will seek evidence from their main setting that the member of staff has completed relevant safeguarding training in line with other similar staff or volunteers and they have read Part I and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

## 13 Allegations of abuse against staff

13.1 Riverbank takes all allegations against staff seriously and will manage them in line with this policy, Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (**September 2019**) and the **CSCP Guidance, 'Allegations against Staff and Persons in a Position of Trust'**.

13.2 If a concern or allegation of abuse arises against the Headteacher, it must be reported to the *Chair of Governors* without delay.

13.3 If a concern or allegation of abuse arises against any member of staff other than the Headteacher, it must be reported to the Headteacher without delay. *In the event that the headteacher is unavailable due to illness or other circumstance, concern must be reported to the Deputy Headteacher.*

13.4 Allegations of abuse against staff should be not discussed directly with the person involved.

13.5 The Headteacher or Chair of Governors should consider if the allegation meets the threshold for Local Designated Officer (LADO) intervention. The LADO is operating as usual and referrals must be made through the online referral form here:

[https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/206/coventry\\_safeguarding\\_children\\_partnership/2628/local\\_authority\\_designated\\_officer\\_lado](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/206/coventry_safeguarding_children_partnership/2628/local_authority_designated_officer_lado)

13.6 Concerns relating to a position of trust issue will be referred to the Local Authority designated officer within 24 hours.

13.7 If a child has suffered, or it is suspected that they have suffered, abuse or harm, a MASH referral will also be made.

13.8 In the instances where an allegation is dealt with internally, the Local Authority designated officer will provide information and support to Riverbank in managing the allegation. This service is will still be provided throughout this period of emergency.

13.9 The procedure for whistleblowing is outlined in the school's main Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## **14 Policy Review**

14.1 This policy is a dynamic document and will be updated regularly as further government and local guidance is published.

## **Appendix A – Process for reporting safeguarding and child protection concerns**

Safeguarding processes remain as stated in the safeguarding policy with Jayne Heavey (DSL) or Gaynor Clarke (DDSL) being available every day either in school, via telephone or e mail.

Where Jayne and Gaynor are not on-site staff should liaise with the nominated member of SLT who remains on site throughout the day. All SLT members are Level 3 safeguarding trained.

All students in Riverbank have an EHCP, SLT therefore carried out a risk assessment based on the child's:-

- Medical needs (are they at higher risk of harm if they contract the virus)
- Family support mechanisms at home, including if they have a social worker or ongoing safeguarding concerns.
- Students ability to understand social isolation
- Families where one member of the family is a key worker

The safeguarding team continue to work with external agencies such as school nursing, virtual head teacher and social care to assess needs of the family and develop an action plan. Where the student has safeguarding concerns or a social worker this rational is recorded on 'CPOMS'.

### **Students in school**

Riverbank continues to provide a safe space for identified vulnerable students

Staff must continue to be vigilante that unsuitable people are not allowed to enter the children's work place or gain access to children

Students who remain in school have been allocated a key member of staff who will where possible try to maintain social distancing. However, given the special educational needs of Riverbank students this will prove difficult to maintain at all times.

### **Students who remain at home**

Tutor teams will ensure that all families are contacted at least once per week. The contact will focus on

- 1) Safe and well checks (including emotional wellbeing and mental health).  
Advice on learning (including e safety)
- 2) Advice on providing structure and routine at home
- 3) Signposting to support services (including websites)
- 4) Food vouchers.

Contact is then reported to DSL who monitors concerns and ensure correct safeguarding procedures are in place. Any concern/actions s are recorded on 'CPOMS'.

Where contact is difficult with a family due to language barriers the school are using the local authority EMAS/MAT schools support service to maintain weekly contact.

### **Safeguarding training and induction**

Any new staff starting at Riverbank must have read and signed to say they understand the safeguarding policy (including this addendum)

They must then complete the 'I hasco' safeguarding online training within 1 week of starting their post

They must also receive induction with either the Head teacher or DSL within 2 weeks of starting their position.

## **Appendix B – Online Safety Resources**

### **Support for schools implementing remote learning**

- <https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/safe-remote-learning/>

### **Support for professionals when using videos and/or live streaming**

- <https://static.lgfl.net/LgflNet/downloads/digisafe/Safe-Lessons-by-Video-and-Livestream.pdf>

### **Support for children and parents**

- Childline – [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- UK Safer Internet Centre to report and remove harmful online content – [www.reportharmfulcontent.com](http://www.reportharmfulcontent.com)
- CEOP (to make a report about online abuse) – [www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre](http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre)
- Internet Matters (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online – [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)
- London Grid for Learning (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online) – [www.lgfl.net/online-safety/](http://www.lgfl.net/online-safety/)
- Net-aware (support for parents and carers from the NSPCC) – [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)
- Parent info (for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online) – [www.parentinfo.org](http://www.parentinfo.org)
- Thinkuknow (advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online) – [www.thinkyouknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkyouknow.co.uk)
- UK Safer Internet Centre (advice for parents and carers) - <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

## Appendix C – Mental Health Support for Children and Families

*The Government has produced a guidance document with suggestions for managing mental health and wellbeing during this time. Information can be found here:*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19#where-to-get-further-support>

*Add useful websites or sources of information that are relevant to your setting here using this document – links are within the information on the webpage above.*