



Child Protection Policy (Safeguarding) Part 1

Reviewed September 2023

CHILD PROTECTION (Safeguarding) POLICY

1 The School's Responsibility for Child Protection

Riverside School is committed to safeguarding children and young people. It is expected that everyone who works in the school will share this commitment. All adults in the school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to a staff member about anything that worries them. Riverside Staff will always act in the best interest of the child.

This involves ensuring that students are protected from significant physical or emotional harm and that there is a positive commitment to ensure the satisfactory development and growth of the individual.

Everyone working at Riverside School should be aware of and, when necessary, follow the school's Child Protection Guidelines, which are in line with the UK Department of Education's (DoE) practice and procedures and guided by policies and guidance in: Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023 and Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018 and with the guidance provided by the International Taskforce on Child Protection (ITFCP). Riverside School's Child Protection Policy can be accessed on the School Website.

At Riverside School, we are committed to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([UNCRC](#)) and to the implementation of the four general principles:

- Equality: the UNCRC applies to all children (Article 2)
- The best interests of the child must be a top priority (Article 3)
- Every child has the right to life, survival and opportunities to develop to their full potential (Article 6)
- Every child has a right to be heard and listened to in matters that affect them (Article 12)

In addition to the ITFCP's expectations that,

- All children have equal rights to be protected from harm and abuse
- Everyone has a responsibility to support the protection of children
- All schools have a responsibility to build a community that values diversity, equity, and inclusion for each child
- All schools have a duty of care to children enrolled in the school and those who are affected by the operations of the school
- All actions on child protection are taken with the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

2 Purpose

Riverside School wants the students in its care to:

- Be healthy
- Enjoy their lives
- Achieve economic well-being
- Make a positive contribution to society
- Stay safe

This policy aims to:

- provide clear direction to staff and others about procedures and the expected codes of behaviour in identifying and reporting Child Protection and Safeguarding issues.
- ensure that Child Protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally, and in ways that support the needs of the child.

- ensure that parents are aware of the school's policies and procedures.
- make clear the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures.

3 Child Protection in School

1. All school staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for students, and prevent concerns from escalating.
2. All staff should be prepared to identify students who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.
3. Any staff member who has a concern about a child's welfare should follow the referral processes set out in Riverside's Child Protection Policy.
4. Riverside School must provide a safe environment. The School Board is responsible for this aspect of child protection. The Recruitment Officer is responsible for the implementation of Safer Recruitment procedures for people wishing to work at the school.
5. Staff members are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the **best** interests of the child.
6. The School must promote satisfactory development and growth. This is ensured by providing intellectual and physical challenge through the development of a sound curriculum policy that will promote the welfare and safeguarding of children. The School aims to create an environment within which children feel comfortable and know how to discuss such matters within a culture of strong pastoral support.
7. The school will include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE and e-safety which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse. School Enrichment Days and assemblies are also key means of delivery.
8. The School is also bound to take reasonable measures to safeguard the emotional welfare of its students from bullying or abuse within the school. Specifically, the school's anti-bullying policy should be consulted.
9. The School will ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from outside agencies.

4 Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection, as part of safeguarding and promoting welfare, refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child. Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full-time or part-time, in a paid or voluntary position.

Child or student refers to all young people under the age of 18 and those over the age of 18 who are students.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are acting in a parental role (ie step-parent, foster parent, adoptive parent, or carer).

5 Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities

- Are young carers
- Are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after

6 Roles and Responsibilities

Each of Riverside's four sites has *Designated Safeguarding Leads* for child protection matters.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in:

Riverside Early Years School:	Connie Falk
Riverside Primary School:	Graeme Chisholm
Riverside Junior High School:	Nicky Millar
Riverside Senior High School:	Sarita Myers

Child Protection Chair:	Graeme Chisholm
Child Protection Deputy Chair:	Sarita Myers

The **Chair, Deputy Chair and Riverside Board** have the overall responsibility for the implementation of the Policy and Procedures for the protection of children and ensuring its objectives are met. Graeme Chisholm will continue in the role of the DSL Chair in the 2023/24 academic year as Al Falk is the Corporate Director of Riverside O.P.S.

Each *Designated Safeguarding Lead* has the responsibility for the implementation of the Policy and Procedures for the protection of Children in their designated school. All Staff are expected to follow this policy and take the appropriate action to meet the aims and objectives.

*However, the designated **Child Protection Chair and Deputy** have specific duties to deal with the effective functioning of this policy. Their roles and responsibilities are detailed below.*

7 Child Protection Chair

The Child Protection Chair is responsible for acting as a source of advice on child protection matters, for coordinating action within the school and for liaising with families, the [police](#) and other agencies about suspected or actual cases of abuse.

The role of the Child Protection Chair with the support of the Deputy Chair is to:

- Provide information and advice on child protection matters within Riverside School.
- Ensure that Riverside's Policy and Procedures for the protection of children are followed and particularly to inform the Principal and Co- Directors of concerns about individual students.
- Ensure that the appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed if appropriate in writing and securely and confidentially filed.
- Liaise with outside agencies involved, for example the [police](#).
- Keep relevant people within the school informed about any action taken and any further action required. This is on a need to know basis
- Advise Riverside of child protection training needs in liaison with the Deputy Child Protection Chair and the Co-Director and School Principals.
- Ensure copies of all reports of incidents are given to the Co-Director to be stored in safekeeping

(Myconcern).

- Oversee the MyConcern implementation, database and software
- Promote educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school
- Liaise with the senior mental health lead and, where available, the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- To take lead responsibility for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.
- The Deputy Child Protection Chair takes on this role in the absence of the Chair.

8 Designated Safeguarding Leads

Riverside School has assigned a Designated Safeguarding Lead to each school site. In the case of a disclosure, the appropriate Lead will meet with the Chair within 24 hours. It is not necessary to arrange a meeting with the full Child Protection Team within this time frame, although other members may be asked to join.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is to:

- Act as a first point of contact and support for staff in relation to child protection issues.
- Record the reporting of a disclosure of alleged abuse made by a child to a member of staff.
- Discuss future action with the member of staff who made the report, after speaking with the CP Chair. (Where appropriate, another member of staff may be included where he/she has observed possible signs of abuse or heard a child disclosing details of potential abuse.)
- Record all actions taken and advise the CP Chair within 24 hours.
- Ensure copies of all reports of incidents will be passed to the CP Chair.
- Ensure the Chair is contacted immediately, if the matter is urgent and there are concerns for the safety of a child, so that the Chair can take appropriate action.
- To take responsibility for safeguarding, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

9 Role of the Board and Annual Review of Policy

The nominated Board Member responsible for liaising with the CP Chair over matters regarding child protection issues is Lee Ann Thompson. It is her role to:

- Ensure the School has a child protection policy and that procedures are in place, which are consistent with The UK Department for Education Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, 2018, [Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023](#) and Thirtyone:eight (previously CCPAS) procedures.
- Ensure the School has a child protection policy and that procedures are in place, which are consistent with local law
 - [Systems of Social and Legal Protection of Children in the Czech Republic](#)
 - [Social and Legal Protection of Children - General Introduction](#)
 - [Country Information for Czech Republic - Legislation and Policy](#)
 - [MSMT - CZ](#)
- The contents of the following has been drafted and put into place after taking into account the Czech child protection act & the Office for International Legal Protection of Children & the special needs and inclusion policy of the European Agency, as well as the UN child protection act guidelines it aligns with the US & UK as well as EU acts.
- Ensure that an annual item is placed on the Board Members' agenda to review the School's Child Protection policy and procedures, and the efficiency with which the related duties are undertaken.
- Report on changes to the Child Protection policy/procedures, training undertaken by the CP Chair, other staff and Board Members, the number of incidents/cases (without details or names) and the place of child protection issues in the school curriculum.
- Liaise, with due regard to issues of confidentiality with the CP Chair regarding allegations of child abuse.

- Be responsible for the oversight of procedures relating to liaison with Thirtyone:eight the relevant agencies and the Police in relation to any allegations of child abuse made against the Co-Directors, including possible involvement in multi-agency strategy discussions to ensure that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction. The training should be regularly updated.

Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements at Riverside School will be remedied without delay.

10 Role of External Agencies

The Canadian Medical Care (www.cmcpraha.cz), Thirtyone:eight (www.Thirtyone:eight.co.uk/), Kidscape (www.kidscape.org.uk), Fond Ohrozenych Deti (www.fod.cz) and Odbor Socialnich Veci (The Department of Social Affairs, Czech Republic, Mgr. Dagmar Soniskovou) represents the CP interests of Riverside School.

The Designated Safeguard Lead is required to undergo refresher training in inter-agency working every two years. Training has been administered by Thirtyone:eight and most recently by Educare since 2017.

Further information on local contacts can be found in Appendix 1.

A wealth of information is available to support schools and this can be found from Page 156 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023](#).

11 Guidance Policy on Confidentiality, Record Keeping, Information Sharing, Retention and Storage

“The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to support the safeguarding and protection of a child” (Information Sharing, 2018, p. 9).

A student with child protection issues will have a separate file as well as his/her main school file. The special, secure file for sensitive information will be stored on the ‘MyConcern’ safeguarding platform. The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe.

Please refer to the school’s Data Protection Policy and Part 2 of the safeguarding guidance for further information.

12 Definition of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children. The following definitions of abuse are aligned with the guidelines in Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Physical Abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. Physical abuse also includes an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless

or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue (also known as child on child abuse) in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or colleges policy and procedures for dealing with it.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home; abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; and may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

13 Examples of Abusive Actions

The key criteria in assessing whether or not to refer a situation to the CP Chair is whether the harm caused, or risk of harm, is significant and/or persistent.

Any of the following between adult and student should be automatically referred:

Physical Abuse: Any form of physical assault (including attempts), such as:

- kicking
- punching
- pushing
- smacking
- slapping
- shaking
- throwing a missile at a student, such as a board rubber or white-board pen.

Sexual Abuse:

- Any form of sexual assault (including attempts)
- Possession of indecent and pseudo indecent photographs of children, including digital images
- Showing indecent or pornographic material to children
- Inappropriate touching, language or behaviour towards any child or student for sexual purposes
- Inappropriate use of text messaging, email or other ICT towards any child or student for sexual purposes

Emotional Abuse and Neglect:

- Racial comments or behaviour, or failing to address these in others

- Homophobic comments or behaviour, or failing to address these in others
- Bullying students, or failing to address these in others
- Persistent sarcasm
- Humiliating students, for example by persistently placing a child in a corner or corridor
- Creating a climate of fear in the classroom
- Inappropriate punishment, for example putting a child in a cupboard
- Failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger
- Failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

14 Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEND and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;

15 Possible Signs of Abuse

Staff should be aware of the following signs that may indicate abuse:

- *Possible physical signs may include unexplained or repeated injuries, bruises in odd places, marks of slapping, biting, gripping etc, cuts in odd places, poor hygiene, marked weight fluctuations.*
- *Possible behavioural signs may include a marked change in behaviour, eating disorders, excessively affectionate or sexual behaviour, emotional isolation, school refusal, an inability to sleep, theft, habits such as thumb-sucking, 'frozen watchfulness'.*

Remember that these symptoms are 'possible' signs and do not automatically mean that abuse has or is taking place; there may be other explanations. In most cases it will be appropriate to discuss your observations with the student's housemaster to help you decide whether you should refer them to the CP Chair.

16 Responding to Allegations of Abuse

Listen to the child

Children who report to a teacher or other adult working at Riverside that someone has abused them must be listened to and heard, whatever form the communication may take.

The following points give guidance on how to deal with a child who makes an allegation:

- Listen to the child, but do not conduct an interview or ask the child to repeat the account. Avoid asking questions and make sure that any questions asked are open-ended (i.e. not inviting yes or no as an answer).
- Do not interrupt when the child is recalling significant events.
- Make a careful note of all information, including details such as timing, setting, who was present and what was said, in the child's own words. The account should be obtained verbatim or as near as possible. Try to record what was said as contemporaneously as possible. Notes written up afterwards will carry less weight than those made at the time.
- Take care not to make assumptions about what the child is saying or to make interpretations.
- On no account should you make suggestions to the child as to an alternative explanation for their worries.

Staff should point out to the informant that action will be taken as a result of the allegation and you should ask the informant of any steps they would like taken to protect them now that they have made the allegation.

- The written record of the allegations should be signed and dated by the person who received them as soon as is practicable.
- All actions subsequently taken should be recorded.
- The disclosure should be reported to the CP Chair as soon as possible, and certainly within 24 hours.

Remember, no member of staff should promise confidentiality to a student who makes an allegation.

In responding to a child who makes such disclosures, account should be taken of the age and understanding of the child and whether the child or others may be at risk of significant harm. While acknowledging the need to create an environment conducive to speaking freely, the member of staff should make it clear to any student asking for confidentiality that he or she will need to pass on what has been told, to ensure the protection of the child concerned. Within that context, the child should then be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know, and the child will know who these people are.

Take Action

The member of staff who has listened to the allegations of abuse should report immediately to the CP Chair, who will make an urgent initial assessment. The CP Chair and Deputy Chair will also be immediately contacted. If the CP Chair is the person against whom the allegation is made, the member of staff should report to the Co-Directors. The supportive needs of a child who expresses concerns about significant harm should be considered and met, utilising resources within or beyond the school as necessary.

Initial Assessment and Further Action, if appropriate

Immediately an allegation is made, the CP Chair will:

- obtain written details of the allegation, signed and dated, from the person who received the allegation using the myconcern platform.
- record any information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.
- where appropriate, talk to the child concerned.
- make recommendations about further action to the Co-Directors, unless the allegation is against them.
- **There are four possible outcomes of the initial assessment:**
- where the student has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, the incident will be referred immediately under local child protection
- where the child has alleged that a criminal offence has been committed, then again this will be referred under local child protection procedures and the police may carry out a criminal investigation.
- the allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by a member of staff (which does not fall within the above categories) that needs to be considered under school disciplinary procedures
- the allegation is adjudged to be apparently without foundation.

Only if the allegation is trivial or demonstrably false, will further investigations not be warranted.

Where the initial assessment by the Child Protection Officer, Chair and Deputy Chair (or, where the allegation is against the CP Chair, the Co-Directors) concludes that the allegation warrants investigation, there will be a referral within 24 hours to one or more of the agencies with statutory responsibilities to make enquiries.

If a referral needs to be made, parents will be consulted. In really extreme cases the law allows Schools to by-pass parental consent.

17 Additional Types of Abuse and Neglect

The following types of abuse and neglect are described in Part 2 , Guidance of the Safeguarding Policy.

- Children Missing from Education
- Homelessness
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation: County Lines
- Domestic Abuse
- Witnessing hard to others, for example, domestic abuse
- So-called 'Honour-based' Violence
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- The Prevent Duty & Recognising Extremism
- Child on Child Abuse
- Sexting
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools
- Private Fostering
- Forced Marriage

Riverside School identifies students who might need more support in order to be kept safe or to keep themselves safe by following the School's confidential referral system (MyConcern).

18 In the event of a report or suspicion of abuse

Any adult at Riverside School who is told of any incident or strong suspicion of physical or sexual child abuse occurring in the school, or to a student of the school at home or outside the school, or who suspects or knows this to be the case themselves must report the information immediately to the CP Chair. In the event of an allegation against the CP Chair, the information should be reported directly to the Head.

The CP Chair may, if necessary, interview the student to clarify the nature of an allegation or suspicion, before deciding on an appropriate course of action. If necessary, an immediate referral will be made to the local Czech Republic Social Services Department or police rather than carrying out an investigation.

NB. School staff (including the CP Chair and the Co-Directors) should not investigate reports of physical or sexual abuse themselves. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved should not be interviewed by school staff beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse. Guidance on the correct response to a student's disclosure of abuse is given in the Child Protection – General Guidance.

19 Allegations against members of staff, supply staff, volunteers and the Head

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher or volunteer, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children, or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a staff member who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

The School will deal with any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

The School's procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement. Further advice including a flow chart on P17 can be found [here](#).

Low Level Concerns

All concerns about adults, including those that do not meet the harm threshold, should be shared with the Co-Director responsibly. A flow chart describing how to manage low level concerns can be found in Appendix 2. Further advice from 2022 can be found on this [link](#).

The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the threshold set out at above. A low-level concern is any concern – no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

If the concern has been raised via a third party, the headteacher/principal should collect as much evidence as possible by speaking:

- directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously;
- to the individual involved and any witnesses.

Reports about supply staff and contractors should be notified to their employers, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Staff should be encouraged and feel confident to self-refer, where, for example, they have found themselves in a situation which could be misinterpreted, might appear compromising to others, and/or on reflection they believe they have behaved in such a way that they consider falls below the expected professional standards.

Low-level concerns should be recorded in writing, including:

- name* of individual sharing their concerns
- details of the concern
- context in which the concern arose
- action taken

(* if the individual wishes to remain anonymous then that should be respected as far as reasonably possible)

Records must be kept confidential, held securely and comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. Schools and colleges should decide how long they retain such information, but it is recommended that it is kept at least until the individual leaves their employment.

Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

The records' review might identify that there are wider cultural issues within the school or college that enabled the behaviour to occur. This might mean that policies or processes could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of it happening again.

19.1 Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to different division of the school

19.2 Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

19.2 Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Co-Directors (or Chair of the Board where either one of the Co-Directors are the subject of the allegation) – the 'case manager' – will take the following steps:

Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority or the case manager may seek appropriate legal advice. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police).

Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the

police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies.

Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police, the lawyer and/or children's social care services, as appropriate.

If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details.

If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation.

If it is decided that further action is needed, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police, lawyer, and/or children's social care services as appropriate.

Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate, such as a professional association representative or a colleague.

Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following an agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice.

Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence). Make a referral to the police where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.

Next Steps:

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the case holder will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

19.3 Additional considerations for supply staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as supply staff provided by an agency, the School will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our local child protection officer to determine a suitable outcome
- The Co-Director will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation

- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the local authority designated officer as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

19.4 Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

19.5 Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local child protection officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS (or a similar agency associated with whom the person was licenced) for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. The case manager would also seek guidance from the Internal Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP). If they think that the individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if they think the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, they must make a referral to the DBS or similar and the ITFCP.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the Co-Directors, or the Chair of the Board in the case of an allegation against the Co-Directors, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate

against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

19.6 Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police, lawyer and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

19.7 Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), or similar for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

19.8 References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

19.9 Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified

- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

Further guidance can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023.

20.1 Non recent allegations (Historical Abuse)

Non-recent abuse is an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse when an adult was abused as a child or young person under the age of 18.

When an allegation is received action must be taken because:

- The alleged abuse may not have been an isolated incident
- There is a probable likelihood that a person who abused a child/ren in the past may still be doing so
- The perpetrator may still be working with or caring for child/ren
- Criminal prosecutions may still take place even though the allegations are historic in nature and may have taken place many years ago.

When receiving information about non-recent abuse the staff member should seek to obtain where possible the following:

- Name and contact details of the person making the allegation.
- Name of the individual who the allegation is about and any other identifying information, including location
- Name of any children involved
- Date and time of when the abuse occurred
- Key information about the nature of the non-recent abuse allegation
- Establish, where possible, if the alleged perpetrator is still working with or caring for children
- Establish whether other agencies are involved.

Where a child or adult makes an allegation to a school that they were abused as a child, the individual should be advised to report the allegation to the police. Non-recent allegations made by a child should be reported to the relevant authorities in line with the local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations. The DSL will coordinate with local authority, children's social care and the police. Abuse can be reported no matter how long ago it happened.

A flowchart linked to Historical or non recent abuse allegations can be found in the following [link](#).

20.2 Non recent allegations (Historical Abuse) against a former or current staff member [link](#)

On receiving a non recent allegation against a former or current staff member, the DSL and Co-Director should,

- Take urgent action
- Assess risk

The DSL and Co-Director should carry out some immediate checks in order to answer the following questions:

- When was the pupil at the school?
- When was the accused staff member at the school?
- Are there any pupils or staff files relating to those involved?
- On the basis of these checks is the allegation at least capable of being true and does it involve individuals whom the records indicate actually attended the school?

Assuming the answer to the final question above is 'yes', the DSL and Co-Directors will then address the following questions:

- What has happened to the accused staff member?
- Is he/she still working at or involved with Riverside (or any other setting with access to children)?

- If the answer to this question is yes, then it is possible that a child is at risk of significant harm and the procedures under the heading 'Allegations against members of staff, supply staff, volunteers and the Head' will be followed.

Where the accused no longer works at the Riverside School, the DSL and Co-Director would consider the following,

- Report the allegation to the police department of the person's country of origin
- Report the allegation to the police department of the person's new location
- Report the allegations to the person's current place of employment
- Report the allegations to the authority who granted the teaching licence

If police are involved and investigating, they will notify international law enforcement partners as required. Riverside will seek legal advice regarding the school's obligation to report the allegations and findings to potential future employers in any jurisdiction ([see P29](#)).

In some cases, records will indicate that the accused is dead, and by definition, no children can be at continuing risk of significant harm from him/her. Nevertheless, on the basis that a crime has been reported the school will still report the allegation to the relevant police.

Unless asked not to do so by the police, the school will undertake some due diligence at this point. From a review of files held, the school will aim to identify

1. Whether the appropriate employment checks were carried out on the accused staff member;
2. Whether the school was made aware of any allegations about inappropriate conduct during his/her employment;
3. How and when the employment came to an end;
4. If the school was aware of any allegations of misconduct, whether proper referrals were made to the relevant agencies at that time; and
5. what records exist of any references given by the school to future employers.

All such information will be shared with the police.

The following points will also be considered by the school.

- To consult with the school's insurer before taking any further steps
- Seek legal and/or PR advice in order to establish (a) what the next steps should be and (b) whether any legal or PR concerns arise as a result of the handling of the matter in question.

Communication with the alleged victim will be handled diligently and where there is an insurer in consultation with it. He/she will be encouraged to report the allegation to the police and informed that the police have the statutory powers necessary to carry out any investigation. The school will also confirm that it has referred the alleged crimes to the police. The victim will be informed that, in practice, however, the police will normally look for the alleged victim's agreement and co-operation before carrying out any investigation.

The school recognises that, whenever the police or other statutory authorities are handling or investigating an allegation of abuse, it will not be appropriate for the school to carry out its own investigation for fear of inadvertently prejudicing any such investigation. Unless the police or social services ask the school to do so, it will refrain from any internal investigation.

Whilst the above points assume that the accused was a member of the school's staff, it may equally be a former governor, pupil, parent or visitor to the school. Whichever it is, the guidelines above will generally be applied and advice sought on individual cases where there is any uncertainty.

21 Allegations of abuse made against other children ([see Part 2 & child on child abuse policy](#))

Children are capable of abusing their children. Child on child abuse can manifest itself in many ways. Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter" or "part of growing up".

Gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse could, for example, include students being sexually touched/assaulted or students being subject to initiation/hazing type violence. Each could involve an online element.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for children to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.

Staff should refer to the Code of Conduct and Promotion of Good Behaviour Policy, Admissions, Discipline & Exclusions Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy for further guidance.

22 Whistleblowing

Working closely with children is fundamental to teaching in schools. Where such interaction with children exists, so also does the opportunity to abuse them. It is regrettably the case that, in rare instances, teachers and other staff have been found to be responsible for child abuse. Given their daily contact with students in a variety of situations, staff are also vulnerable to allegations of abuse, whether deliberately or innocently false, malicious or misplaced. However, staff should avoid making their own judgments of whether an allegation is false or otherwise.

The Riverside School whistleblowing policy provides staff with an avenue to raise awareness and concern if they feel that a colleague or manager is engaged in conduct that is causing a negative effect upon the welfare and safety of any children in one of the schools. This could also refer to a situation where a staff member considers that behaviour by another member of staff is not being addressed by the management of the school. It provides a clear way to raise awareness of a concern directly to Riverside School. Please refer to the Policy on Whistleblowing.

23 Staff Training

The induction programme ensures that all staff members working at Riverside School will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff members should receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via email, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. This includes the briefing of new staff, as part of their induction after arrival at the school and refresher training for all staff at three-yearly intervals.

All new staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of their responsibilities as part of the induction process.

24 Safer Recruitment Guidelines *(Please see the safer recruitment policy for further details)*

The Recruitment Officer will ensure that guidance is followed particularly with respect to the appointment of staff. Staff who will have unsupervised access to students will be subject to the statutory DBS checks and be checked for compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations on appointment. The recruitment officer also utilises guidance provided by the International Taskforce on Child Protection.

In addition, staff will complete the following,

- A Prohibition Check
- A Summer Holiday Self Declaration
- Updated Czech police Checks every 2 years

The CP Chair will gain assurance that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation who are working with the school's students.

CHILD PROTECTION - General guidance

25 The Law and Child Protection

Current legislation, is framed around the principle that the child's interests are paramount. In particular, the law now assumes the following:

- We share responsibility for 'safeguarding and promoting' each student's welfare with other adults and agencies. Failure to identify abuse, or potential abuse, and then refer it on may be deemed negligent. The term 'identify' may require us to pick up hints, not just respond to a straight disclosure of abuse - in most cases there may not be one.
- The child should be given credence in all circumstances. Even if we consider the 'harm' to be trivial, the child may not. The law takes the child's perspective and interests before all others.

26 General Guidance for Staff

Guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student, for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a student by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a student, and so on.

Riverside School is required by the legislation to brief all staff on procedures relating to child protection and responding to allegations of child abuse. Staff are asked to operate according to these guidelines.

1.1 Staff should familiarise themselves with the School's Child Protection Policy.

1.2 If staff members have any concerns about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger) a conversation should take place with the child protection officer to agree a course of action. If the child protection office is not available, staff should speak to a member of the senior management team.

1.3 If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to the appropriate authorities (please see the list of contacts) and/or the police immediately. Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the Child Protection Officer and Chair, the designated officer and chair should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

1.4 Child abuse to be reported includes abuse of a student by a staff member or other adult, abuse at home which a student reports to staff, abuse by a stranger outside school, and abuse of one student by another student. In the case of abuse by a student, or group of students, the key issues identifying the problem as abuse (rather than an isolated instance of bullying or 'adolescent experimentation' which could be handled within the normal framework for discipline) are:

- the frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s);
- whether the victim was coerced by physical force, fear, or by a student or group of students significantly older than himself, or having power or authority over him;
- whether the incident involved a potentially criminal act; and
- whether if the same incident (or injury) had occurred to a member of staff or other adult, it would have been regarded as assault or otherwise actionable.

1.5 Any member of staff who is told of any incident or strong suspicion of physical or sexual child abuse occurring in the School, or to a student of the School at home or outside the School (or who knows of or suspects such abuse) must report the information immediately to the CP Chair. Further guidelines on responding to a disclosure are given below.

Staff are asked not to investigate in detail reports of physical or sexual abuse themselves. The School authorities are asked by the Thirtyone:eight and Kidscape not to interview alleged victims or perpetrators beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse. Questioning should always be limited to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only, strictly avoiding “leading” the student or making suggestions that introduces your own ideas about what may have happened. (The reason for this requirement is that in the event of any legal action subsequently, the whole matter may be prejudiced by such questioning, which may confuse the law of evidence.). Further interviewing or investigation will be carried out by specially trained staff only, following procedures agreed between (amongst others) the local authority and Police in line with Government requirements.

1.6 Staff should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to anyone raising complaints about abuse but may point out that they will pass on information to only a minimum number of people who have to be told to ensure that proper action is taken to sort the problem out. See further guidance below.

1.7 If any of this happens a written record should be made as soon as possible - ideally at the time of the disclosure (see further guidance below and attachment) - and a copy given to the CP Chair and uploaded to ‘MyConcerns’.

If a student concern is related to a member of the Child Protection Team, the concern should be written down and discussed with the Co-Directors (Alfalk@riversideschool.cz or Graemeshisholm@riversideschool.cz) and not be added to the Myconcern platform.

1.8 Staff should be aware that the Co-Directors will, if necessary, suspend from duty, pending investigation, any staff member who is alleged to have abused a student or students. Current advice encourages schools to suspend, without pre-judgment of guilt, and as a precautionary measure, where there is a concern about possible abuse.

1.9 The School is also required to refer all allegations of abuse to the local Social Services Department. This referral must happen within 24 hours (in writing or with written confirmation of a telephone referral). If in doubt, consult the CP Chair.

Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the School

Among the special features of life at Riverside School is an informal atmosphere. Teachers are expected to fulfil many roles in and out of the classroom and are likely to find themselves working with large and small groups of students. Given the risk of false alarms and even deliberate hoaxes on the part of students, staff are advised to think carefully about the setting and nature of their varied relationships with their students so as not to lay themselves open to undue suspicion or accusation. All staff are required to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

2.1 It is probably prudent if engaging with students in a non-public setting, not to do so on a one to one basis but to meet with at least two students at any one time. This would normally apply for social gatherings as well. Clearly this would not normally apply in an obvious public place like the classroom or office or study, but outside that formal context, care must be taken.

2.2 Inappropriate physical contact should be avoided. Contrary to popular belief, the Children Act says very little about what may or may not be done in this area, beyond the general requirement to look after children properly. There is such a thing as appropriate physical contact and ‘non-abusive’ actions include:

- applying restraint to prevent a student harming himself or another person;
- removing, with reasonable force, potentially dangerous items from a student’s possession, or a student from a dangerous location;
- shepherding students, for example with a hand on back or shoulder;

- comforting, for example with a hand on shoulder, back or arm; and
- securing attention by tapping a student's shoulder.

It is always unacceptable to harm a child.

2.3 If you find yourself having to accuse a student of an error of omission or commission beyond the trivial, you should make a brief written record of it and date it.

2.4 If you find yourself questioning a student about any serious matter, or one of any possible delicacy, it is advisable to do so with another adult witness present and, again, to make sure that a record is kept. A female teacher questioning a boy should have a male colleague present.

2.5 Staff should ensure that if they are in charge of any school activity or facilities where safety regulations and precautions are required, these are clearly published and the attention of students is drawn to them from time to time. Any accidents or other untoward incidents should always be recorded, signed and dated.

2.6 It is the responsibility of each member of staff to be aware of the complaints procedure and the policy on sanctions.

2.7 It is important not to place students of the same or different age groups in situations which might make bullying, intimidation or other student-to-student abuse more likely and, where such situations might arise, it is important that proper adult supervision be arranged. Senior students, assisting the supervision of junior ones, should also be aware of this.

2.8 Under no circumstances should teaching staff advise on the taking of medicines, increase or decrease of medication and the like. These concerns are strictly within the province of the school's medical staff.

2.9 Teaching staff should bear in mind the requirements of both the law, insurance cover, the school's guidelines and good sense if conveying students in cars, minibuses etc.

In addition to the internal procedures required by the Co-Directors when staff plan trips outside the School, either in term or during the holidays, teaching staff should ensure that students are properly supervised and care taken for their safety and security during such trips. In cases where the trip involves obvious risks such as adventure training style activities, the ratio of supervising staff to students should be given careful consideration. Students should be given clear instructions as to timings, rendezvous and the conduct expected of them.

27 The use of 'Reasonable Force' in Schools

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in schools and colleges to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involve a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury. 'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. A staff member must inform their Principal if the use of reasonable force has been required.

28 Filtering & Monitoring

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring – see paragraph 141 in KCSiE, 2023) for further information) at induction. Filtering and Monitoring Standards can be found [here](#). Good practice may include,

- An annual filtering and monitoring report

- Regular risk assessments
- Clear responsibilities understood by a 3rd part (Touchware), the DSL and the School Leadership.

In 2023, further guidance on [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools](#) was published by gov.uk and by the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) in addition to a [checklist](#).

29 Social Network (Please see the ‘Social Networking Policy’ for further guidance)

Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

- No member of staff should interact with any student in the school on social networking sites
- No member of staff should interact with any ex-student in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18
- This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a student’s area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the student access to the staff members’ area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.
- Where family and friends have students in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the Principal in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment.
- If you have any evidence of students or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school.

30 Mobile Phones and Cameras

Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but are to limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present. Staff members’ personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards during contact time with pupils.

Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.

With the explicit permission of the Principal on each occasion, permission may be given to use a mobile phone. During trips or events, the use of mobile phones to take photographs should be documented in a risk assessment after permission has been granted.

31 Teaching

At Riverside School pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

32 Remote Teaching

Professional Boundaries

Teaching online is different to teaching face-to-face. But adults should always maintain professional relationships with children and young people. Staff are reminded to follow the Staff Code of Conduct throughout remote learning.

Child Protection Concerns & Raising Concerns

If children aren’t seeing trusted adults at school every day, it’s even more important that staff are able to identify any child protection concerns and take appropriate action.

For example, concerns may arise when:

- a staff member sees or hears something worrying during an online lesson
- a child discloses abuse during a phone call or via email.

Staff should continue to document concerns on the MyConcern platform, following the guidelines as set out in this policy.

Platforms

Always make sure the platform you are using is suitable for the children's age group, stage of development and ability. Set up school accounts for any online platforms you use (don't use teachers' personal accounts). Double check the privacy settings.

Contacting Children at Home

Sometimes staff might need to contact children individually, for example to give feedback on homework. Staff should only contact children during normal school hours, or at times agreed by the school leadership team. Use parents' or carers' email addresses, or phone numbers to communicate with children, unless this poses a safeguarding risk. School generated student email addresses can also be used. Use school accounts to communicate via email or online platforms, never teachers' personal accounts.

33 Related Policies & Documents

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) [Part One]; and school leaders and staff that work directly with children should also read Annex A

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Policy on Social Networking
- Policy on Conduct and Discipline
- Policy on Whistleblowing
- Policy on E-safety
- Policy on PSHE & Citizenship
- Policy on Health and Safety
- Policy on Record Keeping, Information Sharing, Retention and Storage
- Safer Recruitment
- Equal Opportunity Policy
- Restraint Policy

Next Review

This policy is to be reviewed, September 2024

Appendix 1

District Contacts in the Czech Republic				
District	Contact name	Position	Contact number	E-mail
Prague 1	Mgr.Hana Vitnerová	Head of Social care Vodičková 18/Office 306	tel: 221 097 353	hana.vitnerova@praha1.cz
Prague 2	Mgr. Marta Konvičková	Head of Child protection Nám.Míru 20/600	tel: 236 044 294	marta.konvickova@praha2.cz
Prague 3	Martina Minhová	Head of Child protection Seifertova 51	tel: 222 116 485	minhova.martina@praha3.cz
Prague 4	Bc.Petra Opočenská	Head of Child protection Antala Staška 2059/80B	tel: 261 192 336	petra.opocenska@praha4.cz
Prague 5	Mgr.Jana Kudrnová	Head of Child protection Nám.14 října 1381/4	tel: 257 000 437	jana.kudrmova@praha5.cz
Prague 6	Bc.Jitka Köcherová	Head of Child protection Čs.Armády 23/601 office 102	tel: 220 189 612	jkocherova@praha6.cz
Prague 7	Vlasta Kopřivová Koničková	Head of Child protection U Průhonu 1338/38 office 2.03	tel: +420 220 144 186	KonickovaV@Praha7.cz
Prague 8	Mgr. Dagmar Kubičková	Head of Child protection U Meteoru 8 office 144	tel: 222 805 244	dagmar.kubicikova@praha8.cz
Prague 9	Mgr. Lucie Mikulenková	Head of Child protection Sokolovská 14/324 office 323	tel: +420 283 091 443	mikulenkoval@praha9.cz
Prague 10	Anna Chochulová	Head of Child protection Vršovická 68 office A/104	tel: 267 093 219	anna.chochulova@praha10.cz
Prague 11	Mgr. Milena Jindřichová	Head of Child protection Ocelíková 627/1	tel: +420 267 902 117	jindrichovam@praha11.cz
Prague 12	Mgr. Andrea Michalcová	Head of Child and family care Čechtická 758	tel: 244 028 317 Mobile: 725 409 301	michalcova.andrea@praha12.cz

Essential Contacts in the Czech Republic

Name	Telephone	Website	Notes
General emergency number	112		European number for ambulance, police and fire brigade Also in ENGLISH
Police	158	https://www.policie.cz/	
Fire brigade	150	https://www.hzscr.cz/hzs-hl-avniho-mesta-prahy.aspx	
Ambulance	155	https://www.zzshmp.cz/	
Helpline Linka bezpečí	116 111 children +420 606 021 021 parents	https://www.linkabezpeci.cz/	Call FREE Helpline for children in any difficult or crisis situation Also online via chat Only in Czech
Spondea	+420 608 118 088	https://www.spondea.cz/en	Domestic violence Program manage your anger On appointment also in ENGLISH
Anabell	+420 774 467 293	http://www.anabell.cz/	Center for help with eating disorders Also in ENGLISH
DONA	116 006	https://www.116006.cz/	Call FREE Center for helping people who suffer from domestic violence or abuse Also in ENGLISH
Linka pro rodinu a školu	116 000	https://linkaztracenedite.cz/	Call FREE For children feeling abandoned, bullied, misused, being on the run from home For adults (parents and teachers) worried about children in terms of bullying, misusing, threatening, children gone missing Also in ENGLISH
Dítě krize	+420 241 484 149	https://www.ditekrize.cz/	Child crisis center, nonstop helpline Also online via chat Only in Czech

Cyberbullying	+420 778 510 510	https://www.ditekrize.cz/	Special line for help with online bullying Only in Czech
ONZ - line for girls and woman	+420 603 213 826 +420 603 210 999	https://www.poradnaproze.ny.eu/aktuality	Support center for woman about contraception, unexpected and unwanted pregnancies Only in Czech
Modrá linka	+420 608 902 410 +420 731 197 477	https://www.modralinka.cz/	Support line for children in difficult situations Phone only in Czech Email also in ENGLISH
Sananim K-centrum	+420 602 666 415	http://www.sananim.cz/o-nas-1/kontakt-ni-centrum-kc.html	Center for help with addictions On appointment also in ENGLISH
FOD Klokánek	+420 271 912 500 +420 724 667 672 - emergency	https://www.klokanek-laskova.cz/	Shelter for children Also in ENGLISH
Social care OSPOD	+420 220 189 612	https://www.praha6.cz/odb-or06	Social services and advisory Only in Czech Contact when parents do not fulfill parental obligations - child is obviously neglected
Office for international legal protection of children	+420 542 215 522	https://www.umpod.cz/	Also in ENGLISH Mediator in communication between two countries in matters of family laws
PPP6	+420 220 612 131	https://www.ppp6.cz/	Pedagogical-psychological consultancy PhDr. Veronika Pavlas Martanová, PhD. (martanova@ppp6.cz) - contact person for Riverside Only in CzechFor families and school

Essential Contacts in the UK

Name	Websites	Notes
Trafficking	https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/what-we-do/crime-threats/modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking	National crime agency human trafficking
Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912592/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_Sept_2020.pdf	From Page 94
NSPCC	https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/domestic-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/	UK domestic abuse, signs, symptoms. effects
Refuge	http://www.refuge.org.uk/get-help-now/what-is-domestic-violence/effects-of-domestic-violence-on-children/	effects of domestic violence on children
Save Lives	http://www.safelives.org.uk/knowledge-hub/spotlights/spotlight-3-young-people-and-domestic-abuse	young people & domestic abuse
Children Missing in Education	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf	



Child Protection (Safeguarding) Part 2 Guidance

Reviewed September 2023

1. Guidance Policy on Record Keeping, Information Sharing, Retention and Storage

“The most important consideration is whether sharing information is likely to support the safeguarding and protection of a child” (Information Sharing, 2018, p. 9).

The 2015 version of the information sharing guidance has been updated in response to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018, and it supersedes the HM Government Information sharing: guidance for practitioners and managers published in March 2015. The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe. (Information Sharing (2018) Page 5)

The Seven Golden Rules to Sharing Information

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or Thirtyone:eight, if in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

To Effectively Share Information:

- all practitioners should be confident of the processing conditions, which allow them to store, and share, the information that they need to carry out their safeguarding role. Information which is relevant to safeguarding will often be data which is considered ‘special category personal data’ meaning it is sensitive and personal .
- where practitioners need to share special category personal data, they should be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes ‘safeguarding of children and individuals at risk’ as a condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent
- information can be shared legally without consent, if a practitioner is unable to, cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if to gain consent could place a child at risk.
- relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.

The Principles

Necessary and Proportionate

When taking decisions about what information to share, you should consider how much information you need to release. Not sharing more data than is necessary to be of use is a key element of the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, and you should consider the impact of disclosing information on the information subject and any third parties. Information must be proportionate to the need and level of risk.

Relevant

Only information that is relevant to the purposes should be shared with those who need it. This allows others to do their job effectively and make informed decisions.

Adequate

Information should be adequate for its purpose. Information should be of the right quality to ensure that it can be understood and relied upon. Accurate Information should be accurate and up to date and should clearly distinguish between fact and opinion. If the information is historical then this should be explained.

Timely

Information should be shared in a timely fashion to reduce the risk of missed opportunities to offer support and protection to a child. Timeliness is key in emergency situations and it may not be appropriate to seek consent for information sharing if it could cause delays and therefore place a child or young person at increased risk of harm. Practitioners should ensure that sufficient information is shared, as well as consider the urgency with which to share it.

Secure

Wherever possible, information should be shared in an appropriate, secure way. Practitioners must always follow Riverside's policy on security for handling personal information.

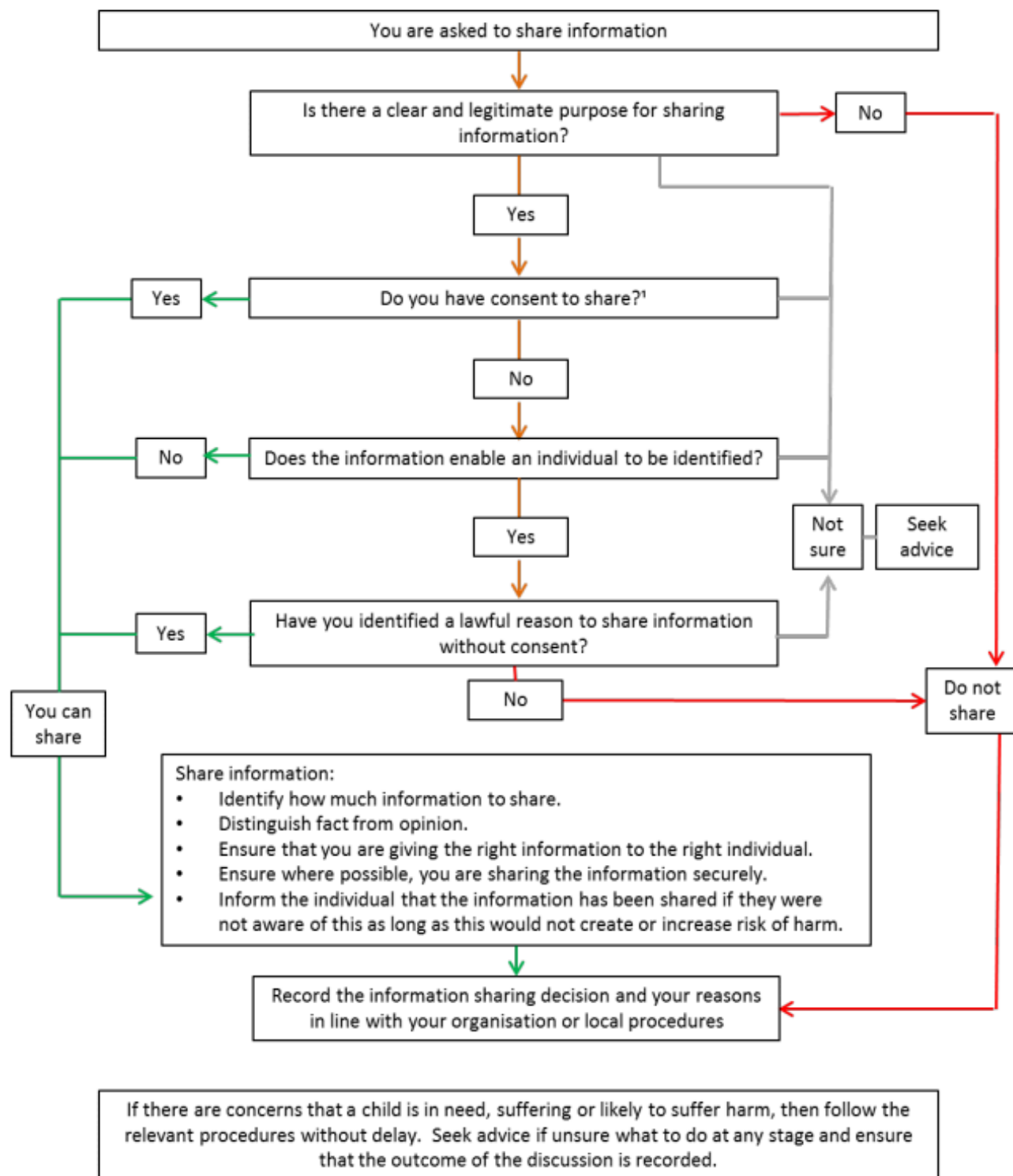
Record

Information sharing decisions should be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share. If the decision is to share, reasons should be cited including what information has been shared and with whom, in line with organisational procedures.

If the decision is not to share, it is good practice to record the reasons for this decision and discuss them with the requester.

In line with Riverside's retention policy, the information should not be kept any longer than is necessary. In some rare circumstances, this may be indefinitely, but if this is the case, there should be a review process scheduled at regular intervals to ensure data is not retained where it is unnecessary to do so.

Flowchart of When and How to Share Information



1. Consent must be unambiguous, freely given and may be withdrawn at any time

Please read 'Information sharing – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers', for further guidance.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Retention and Storage Guidance

Guiding Principles of Record Keeping

According to Data Protection principles, records containing personal information should be:

- adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose(s) for which they are held;
- accurate and up to date; and
- only kept for as long as is necessary (Information Commissioner's Office, 2017(a) and 2017(b)).

The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018 does not change the way child protection records should be stored and retained.

Riverside School must:

- know the reason why we are keeping records about children and/or adults (for example, because they relate to child protection concerns);
- assess how long we need to keep the records for; and
- have a plan for how and when the records will be destroyed.

To keep personal information secure, Riverside School should:

- Upload and store confidential files to the 'MyConcerns' platform.

Concerns about children's safety and wellbeing

If anyone at Riverside School has concerns about a child or young person's welfare or safety, it's vital all relevant details are recorded. This must be done regardless of whether the concerns are shared with the police or children's social care. Riverside uses the programme 'MyConcerns' to document students concerns.

Make sure the report is factual. Any interpretation or inference drawn from what was observed, said or alleged should be clearly recorded as such. The record should always be signed by the person making the report.

Storage of child protection records

- Information about child protection concerns and referrals should be kept in a separate child protection file for each child, rather than in one 'concern log'. The child protection file should be started as soon as you become aware of any concerns.
- It is good practice to keep child protection files separate from a child's general records. You should mark the general record to indicate that there is a separate child protection file. For this reason, the confidential files are stored on the 'MyConcern' platform.

Retention periods: child protection records

The guidance for schools on record keeping and management of child protection information states that:

Child protection files should be passed on to any new school the child attends and kept until they are 25 (this is 7 years after they reach the school leaving age) (IRMS, 2016).

If the school decides not to share its concerns about a child's welfare with the police or social services, it should still keep a record of the issues that were raised.

In some cases, records can be kept for longer periods – see the 'Exceptions' section below for more information.

Recording concerns about adult behaviour

Sometimes concerns might be raised about an adult who works or volunteers with children. This could be because they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or
- behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with young people.

You must keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including;

- what the allegations were;
- how the allegations were followed up;
- how things were resolved;
- any action taken; and
- decisions reached about the person's suitability to work with children.

Keeping these records will enable you to give accurate information if you are ever asked for it. For example:

- in response to future requests for a reference;
- if a future employer asks for clarification about information disclosed as part of a vetting and barring check; or
- if allegations resurface after a period of time.

Storing records relating to adults

Records relating to concerns about an adult's behaviour should be kept in the person's confidential personnel file (not through 'MyConcerns') and a copy should be given to the individual.

Retention periods: concerns about adults

If concerns have been raised about an adult's behaviour around children, the school should keep the records in their personnel file either until they reach the age of 65 or for 10 years - whichever is longer (IRMS, 2016). This applies to volunteers and paid staff.

For example:

- If someone is 60 when the investigation into the allegation is concluded, we keep until their 70th birthday.
- If someone is 30, we keep until they are aged 65.

The school should keep records for the same amount of time regardless of whether the allegations were unfounded. However if the school finds that allegations are malicious it should destroy the record immediately. Information should be kept for this length of time even if the person stops working or volunteering for the organisation.

Exceptions

In some cases, records can be kept for longer periods of time. For example, if:

- the records provide information about a child's personal history, which they might want to access at a later date;
- the records have been maintained for the purposes of research;
- the information in the records is relevant to legal action that has been started but not finished; or
- the records have been archived for historical purposes (for example if the records are relevant to legal proceedings involving the organisation).

Where there are legal proceedings it is best to seek legal advice about how long to retain your records.

Some records are subject to statutory requirements and have a specific retention period. This includes records

relating to:

- children who have been 'looked after' by the local authority;
- adopted children;
- registered foster carers;
- residential children's homes.

The school should check the legislation to see which rules apply to its organisation. Links to the legislation in each of the UK nations is available below.

When records are being kept for longer than the recommended period, files must be clearly marked with the reasons for the extension period.

Disclosure and barring checks

The school should not store copies of disclosure and barring check certificates unless there is a dispute about the results of the check. Instead, a confidential record should be kept of:

- the date the check was completed;
- the level and type of check (standard/enhanced/barred list check and the relevant workforce);
- the reference number of the certificate; and
- the decision made about whether the person was employed (with reasons).

If there is a dispute about the results of a check, the school may keep a copy of the certificate for not longer than 6 months.

Destruction of child protection records

When the retention period finishes, confidential records should be incinerated or shredded in the presence of a member of the organisation or entrusted to a firm specialising in the destruction of confidential material. At the same time any electronic versions of the record must be purged.

If not shredded immediately, all confidential records must be held in a secured plastic bag, labelled as confidential and locked in a cupboard or other secure place; or placed in a confidential waste bin.

Reviewing your child protection records retention and storage policy

The school should review its child protection records retention and storage policy regularly to make sure it is effective and continues to comply with current legislation and guidance. This should be carried out as part of a wider review of safeguarding policies and procedures.

If the school makes changes to its child protection records retention and storage policy, it is best practice to keep a copy of the original version, including a record of the changes made and why. The school should clearly mark the old version so it's clear it has been superseded.

Summary: key points to consider

The school must consider the following questions when developing or reviewing its child protection records retention and storage policy:

- Is its record-keeping in line with data protection principles?
- What records will the school retain and for what purpose?
- How will the records be stored and who will have access to them?
- How long should the school retain records for?
- Does the school need to follow any statutory requirements about the retention of its records?
- What arrangements does the school need to review records?
- What arrangements does the school need to destroy them?
- Does the school's insurer stipulate anything about record retention periods?

- Does the school's regulatory/inspection body (if applicable) set out any minimum expectations about record keeping, retention and destruction?
- Do the school's local safeguarding agencies provide guidance on record retention and destruction that the school is expected to follow?

For more information, please read 'Information sharing – Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers', 2018.

2. Additional Types of Abuse and Neglect

Children Missing from Education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about others safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

At Riverside we monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay. The school will always follow up with parents/carers when students are not at school. This means the school needs to have at least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers.

Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change. In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly.
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).

Child Criminal Exploitation: County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas and market towns.

Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (European Commission) should be considered.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2022 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern of behaviour, or as a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- (a) physical or sexual abuse;
- (b) violent or threatening behaviour;

(c) controlling or coercive behaviour;

(d) economic abuse (adverse effect of the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services); and

(e) psychological, emotional or other abuse.

People are 'personally connected' when they are, or have been married to each other or civil partners; or have agreed to marry or become civil partners. If the two people have been in an intimate relationship with each other, have shared parental responsibility for the same child, or they are relatives.

The definition of Domestic Abuse applies to children if they see or hear, or experience the effects of, the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person.

(The definition can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2022/17/part/1/enacted>)

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

What to Look for

- Children who witness domestic abuse might:
- Be aggressive or bully others, or have tantrums
- Show anti-social behaviour, like vandalism
- Have anxiety, depression, or suicidal thoughts
- Be attention seeking
- Have issues with bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- Have constant or regular illnesses, like colds, headaches or mouth ulcers
- Misuse drugs or alcohol
- Have eating disorders
- Have problems in school or trouble learning
- Become withdrawn

Signs of being a victim of domestic abuse

- Physical injuries
- Stress, anxiety or depression
- Being absent from school
- Personality changes, like being jumpy or nervous
- Low self-esteem and self-blame
- Not communicating independently
- Alcohol or drug use
- Not having money
- Damage to their belongings

The UK based National Domestic Abuse helpline can be called in confidence, 24 hours a day on +44 (0)808 2000 247.

So-called 'Honour-based' Violence

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

All forms of so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled as such.

Where staff are concerned that a child might be at risk of HBV, they must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV or who has suffered from HBV, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs.

It is a criminal offence in the Czech Republic, integrated in paragraph 199 of the Penal Code, and a form of violence against woman and physical abuse. However, there is no specific law or provision addressing FGM or any other type of mutilation in the Czech Republic.

FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Symptoms of FGM

FGM may be likely if there is a visiting female elder, there is talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman, or parents wish to take their daughter out-of-school to visit an 'at-risk' country (especially before the summer holidays), or parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM.

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable.
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems.
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- prolonged or repeated absences from school or college, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

It is the duty of the school to notify police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. This will usually come from a disclosure. Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out; and discuss any such cases with the safeguarding lead and children's social care. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases.

Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining students, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

The Prevent Duty

Riverside School has a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'. Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show

signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The school uses the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet. Riverside is committed to ensuring that our students are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for success in life. Teaching the school's Core Values alongside the School's Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

Mental Health Concerns

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by making a referral on MyConcern.

If you have a mental health concern that is not also a safeguarding concern, speak with Student Welfare to agree a course of action.

Please refer to the Department for Education guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#) for more information.

Recognizing Extremism

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies outside school
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

Child on Child Abuse (See [Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy & KCSIE Part5 from 446](#))

Staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be

standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;

- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
 - upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
 - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
 - bullying (including cyberbullying);
-
- gender-based violence
 - initiation-type violence and rituals.
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”. Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse. This could for example include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence.

At Riverside School we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger student or a more vulnerable student
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other students in the school
- indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

At Riverside School we will support the victims of child on child abuse utilizing our counselling service.

Sexting

Sexting refers specifically to the consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos.

This is a suggested approach based on guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety for all staff and for DSLs and senior leaders.

Your responsibilities when responding to an incident

If you are made aware of an incident involving sexting (also known as ‘youth produced sexual imagery’), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it

- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Storing and sharing sexual or inappropriate images of children (under the age of 18) is a criminal offence. The School will act in the victim's best interest and in line with Czech law. Each sexting case is complex and requires careful consideration. The DSL may seek advice from 31:8, the Czech Police, and a lawyer. The school may be advised to investigate an incident further or provide the relevant information for an external police investigation. A trusted Czech speaking employee will join the safeguarding team to translate.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools

In September 2022, Part 5 of [KCSIE 2022](#) was updated. This guidance should be followed alongside our [Child on Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Policy](#). Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and LGBT children are at greater risk. Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

What is Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment?

Sexual Violence

When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003/105 (UK) and Czech Republic Criminal Code, Sections 186, 187 and 198 and Antidiscrimination Act of 2009. Sexual violence also includes an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence. This may also involve causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment means ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When the school references sexual harassment, it does so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
 - sexualised online bullying;
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
 - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats
 - Upskirting - involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Further information can be found in [Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023](#).

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity: (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology.

Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 15 and 16 year olds who can legally consent to have sex; (Czech act No. 218/2003 Sb. efficient since 2004 January 1, covers cases when there is any kind of trust/dependence, for example, staff member-student.)
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;

- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The UK Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following fact sheet usefully summarises the new duties: Homeless Reduction Act Factsheet. The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

The UK Department and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/ or require accommodation.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

A close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.

In the UK, Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Schools have a mandatory duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement. Although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no

duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear to the school who has parental responsibility.

School staff should notify the designated safeguarding lead when they become aware of private fostering arrangements. The designated safeguarding lead will speak to the family of the child involved to check that they are aware of their duty to inform the LA. The school itself has a duty to inform the local authority of the private fostering arrangements.

On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in Europe. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

The Forced Marriage Unit has published statutory guidance and Multi-agency guidelines, with pages 35-36 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges. School and college staff can contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmufco.gov.uk.

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Pupils staying with host families

Where the school makes arrangements for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

Managing low level concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors

