



Riverside Virtual College - Behaviour and Well-Being Policy

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Contents

1. Policy Statement and Principles
2. Legal and Guidance Framework
3. Scope
4. Roles and Responsibilities
5. Expectations in the Virtual Learning Environment
6. Behaviour and Safeguarding
7. Child-on-Child Abuse
8. Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring
9. SEND, Neurodiversity and Reasonable Adjustments
10. Positive Behaviour, Rewards and Recognition
11. Responding to Behaviour Concerns
12. Behaviour Support and Intervention
13. Sanctions and Consequences
14. Serious Incidents and Placement Review
15. Harmful Sexual Behaviour
16. Mental Health, Wellbeing and Behaviour
17. Critical Incidents and Emergencies
18. Recording, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

19. Staff Training

20. Monitoring and Review

1. Policy statement and principles

Riverside Virtual College (RVC) believes that positive behaviour, emotional wellbeing and meaningful engagement are essential to effective teaching and learning. Our approach is rooted in the Riverside values of Honesty, Integrity and Respect and reflects the needs of a specialist virtual provision supporting neurodiverse pupils.

RVC aims to create a calm, safe, inclusive and supportive online environment in which pupils are able to learn, participate and develop positive relationships. High expectations are maintained for all pupils, while recognising that behaviour may communicate an unmet need, a safeguarding concern, a special educational need or disability (SEND), a mental health difficulty, a communication difference or another barrier to learning. Staff will respond consistently, proportionately and with professional curiosity.

The College promotes positive behaviour through clear expectations, predictable routines, respectful relationships, praise, encouragement, restorative approaches and appropriate individual support. Bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse and behaviour that places another person at risk will not be accepted.

2. Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy has been written with regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 as amended, current Department for Education guidance on behaviour in schools and the Independent School Standards, the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, and relevant Department for Education guidance on safeguarding and remote education, online safety, filtering and monitoring.

RVC will also have regard to applicable local safeguarding procedures, data protection requirements, commissioning arrangements and the terms of individual placements. This policy should be read alongside the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, Attendance and Engagement Policy, SEND Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

3. Scope

This policy applies to pupils participating in RVC education, including live virtual lessons, tutorials, one-to-one sessions, group work, school-managed communications, use of RVC accounts or devices and other RVC-directed online activity. As RVC is a virtual school, behaviour may occur across a range of digital environments and may move between school-managed platforms and pupils' personal online spaces.

Behaviour outside scheduled RVC activity may be considered by the College where it affects a pupil's welfare, involves child-on-child abuse, disrupts education, damages relationships within the RVC community, threatens pupils or staff, or otherwise creates a safeguarding or online-safety concern.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Improvement Partners and Leadership

RVC's Improvement Partners will review the effectiveness of this policy and hold leaders to account for its implementation. The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for establishing a positive virtual culture, ensuring that expectations are understood and applied consistently, and ensuring that serious behaviour incidents and sanctions are recorded appropriately.

Leaders will work closely with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), SEND Lead, pastoral staff, commissioners, local authorities and other professionals where a pupil's behaviour indicates a safeguarding, SEND, wellbeing or placement concern.

4.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for modelling respectful and professional behaviour, teaching and reinforcing RVC's virtual classroom expectations and responding to behaviour in a calm and proportionate manner. Staff should use de-escalation, co-regulation and appropriate behaviour-support strategies before escalating matters wherever it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Staff must remain alert to the possibility that a change in behaviour may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulty, unmet SEND or another welfare concern. Significant incidents must be recorded promptly on the appropriate RVC system. Safeguarding concerns must be referred to the DSL or deputy DSL without delay.

4.3 Parents, Carers and Pupils

RVC seeks to work in partnership with parents and carers. Parents and carers are expected to support their child in following RVC's behaviour, attendance and online-safety expectations, inform the College of relevant changes in circumstances and engage with support or review meetings where concerns arise.

Pupils will be supported, according to their age, SEND, communication needs and level of independence, to understand the standards expected of them and the reasons for those expectations.

5. Expectations in the Virtual Learning Environment

Pupils are expected to:

- join scheduled sessions punctually and be ready to learn;
 - communicate respectfully with pupils and staff in speech, chat, email and other approved platforms;
 - follow staff instructions and agreed learning routines;
 - use RVC accounts, devices and learning platforms responsibly;
 - protect personal information, passwords and the privacy of others;
 - not record, photograph, screenshot, copy or share another person's image, voice, work or

personal information without appropriate permission;

- not impersonate another person or create/share manipulated, AI-generated or deepfake content intended to harm, humiliate or deceive;
- not use bullying, discriminatory, sexualised, threatening, abusive or harassing language or content;
- not deliberately disrupt live lessons, misuse chat functions or interfere with another pupil's learning;
- follow RVC's rules on AI, online safety and acceptable use; and
- tell a trusted adult if something online makes them feel unsafe, worried or pressured.

6. Behaviour and Safeguarding

Behaviour management and safeguarding are closely connected. KCSIE 2026 requires staff to act immediately where they have concerns about a child's welfare. A behaviour concern must never be allowed to delay a safeguarding response.

Where behaviour raises a safeguarding concern, the member of staff must follow RVC's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and report the matter to the DSL or deputy DSL without delay. Where a child is in immediate danger or there is a risk of serious harm, emergency safeguarding procedures will be followed.

7. Child-on-Child Abuse

RVC recognises that children can abuse other children and that this can happen inside or outside school and online. Even where no reports have been made, staff must not assume that child-on-child abuse is not occurring.

- bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children;
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence and sexual harassment, including online sexual harassment;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images, including AI-generated or manipulated intimate images/deepfakes where relevant;
- upskirting and other technology-assisted sexual abuse;
- initiation or hazing-type violence or rituals; and
- coercion, threats, blackmail, sextortion or other harmful online behaviour.

Staff must not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or an inevitable part of online interaction. The wishes and feelings of affected pupils will be considered, but RVC may need to share information and take action to keep children safe.

8. Online Safety, Filtering and Monitoring

As a virtual school, RVC's behaviour and safeguarding arrangements are closely linked to online safety. RVC will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring arrangements for its technology and will review them at least annually and when significant risks, working practices or technologies change.

- RVC will consider pupils' age, SEND, vulnerability and digital resilience when assessing

online risk;

- school-managed devices and accounts will be subject to appropriate technical controls wherever reasonably practicable, including when used off-site;
- monitoring alerts or concerning online activity will be reviewed promptly and escalated according to their safeguarding significance;
- RVC will consider risks from generative AI, real-time and personalised content, social media, messaging and other emerging technologies;
- pupils and parents/carers will be given clear routes to report harmful online activity; and
- staff will understand that technical filtering cannot replace supervision, education, professional curiosity and safeguarding action.

9. SEND, Neurodiversity and Reasonable Adjustments

RVC specialises in supporting neurodiverse pupils and recognises that behaviour may be influenced by communication differences, sensory needs, anxiety, trauma, executive-function difficulties, emotional regulation needs or other aspects of SEND. Staff will seek to understand the function and context of behaviour rather than responding only to the behaviour that is visible.

Reasonable adjustments will be considered where required by the Equality Act 2010. Depending on individual need, support may include visual structure, reduced language, movement or regulation breaks, alternative communication methods, changes to group size, adapted camera expectations, personalised timetables or other appropriate virtual-learning adjustments.

The need to make reasonable adjustments does not mean that behaviour which harms others will be ignored. RVC will balance the needs and rights of the pupil with the safety, welfare and education of other members of the school community.

10. Positive Behaviour, Rewards and Recognition

RVC believes that positive reinforcement is an important part of developing confidence, engagement and self-regulation. Staff will recognise effort, progress, kindness, resilience, responsible online behaviour and positive contributions to the virtual community.

Recognition may include verbal praise, positive communication with home, praise cards, points, certificates, celebration of progress and other age-appropriate rewards. Reward systems will be used inclusively and will take account of pupils whose SEND or disability affects the way they demonstrate participation or engagement.

11. Responding to Behaviour Concerns

Staff should respond to behaviour in a calm, consistent and proportionate way. Where appropriate, the initial response should focus on helping the pupil regulate, clarifying expectations, understanding what has happened and supporting a return to learning.

Before determining a consequence, staff should consider the seriousness and impact of the behaviour, whether it is repeated, whether there is an unmet need or reasonable adjustment to consider, and whether the behaviour indicates a safeguarding concern. Pupils should be given an

appropriate opportunity to explain what happened.

Serious or repeated incidents will be recorded. RVC will consider whether additional pastoral support, SEND intervention, safeguarding action, parental involvement or multi-agency work is required.

12. Behaviour Support and Intervention

RVC uses a graduated approach to behaviour support. Emerging concerns will normally be addressed by the teacher, tutor or pastoral team through discussion, clarification of expectations and agreed strategies. Where concerns continue, RVC may arrange a meeting with the pupil, parent or carer and relevant staff to review the pupil's needs, reasonable adjustments and support.

Where a higher level of support is required, the Senior Leadership Team and SEND Lead may establish a personalised behaviour or engagement plan, make appropriate curriculum or timetable adjustments, increase pastoral contact or arrange additional one-to-one support. Review dates and intended outcomes should be clear.

If serious or persistent concerns remain despite appropriate support, RVC may convene a formal multi-agency or placement review involving the family, commissioner or local authority and relevant professionals. The stages are a framework rather than an automatic tariff. A pupil may move directly to a higher level of response where the seriousness or risk justifies this. Safeguarding concerns do not need to pass through behaviour stages and must be referred immediately.

13. Sanctions and Consequences

Where a sanction is necessary, it will be reasonable, proportionate and related to the behaviour concerned. RVC will take account of the pupil's age, SEND, disability, vulnerability, the context of the incident and any reasonable adjustments required.

Consequences may include a reminder or formal warning, restorative or reflective work, temporary restriction of particular RVC-managed online privileges, changes to chat or messaging permissions, temporary removal from a live virtual classroom with appropriate alternative learning arrangements, an individual behaviour agreement, increased supervision, meetings with parents or commissioners, or a formal placement review.

RVC will keep a record of sanctions imposed for serious misbehaviour in accordance with the Independent School Standards.

14. Serious Incidents and Placement Review

Serious incidents may include significant threats or abuse, serious bullying or harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, deliberate sharing of harmful or intimate material, serious misuse of RVC technology, credible threats of violence, criminal behaviour or conduct creating a significant safeguarding risk.

A safeguarding concern will not itself be treated as a behaviour sanction. Where a pupil's behaviour presents serious or persistent difficulties, RVC may review whether the current

placement and support arrangements remain appropriate. If the pupil has an EHCP or a commissioned placement, RVC will liaise with the relevant local authority or commissioner and may request an urgent review.

Ending a placement will not be an automatic consequence of a behaviour contract breach or a single safeguarding concern. Any proposal to suspend, alter or end a placement will be considered individually and in accordance with applicable safeguarding, SEND/EHCP, contractual, commissioning and legal requirements. Appropriate continuity and transition arrangements will be considered.

15. Harmful Sexual Behaviour

RVC will respond to harmful sexual behaviour in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Staff will consider the age and development of the children involved, the nature of the behaviour, consent, coercion, power imbalance, vulnerability, online factors and the impact on all children involved.

Sexual violence, sexual harassment, non-consensual intimate imagery, AI-generated sexualised images or deepfakes, sextortion and other technology-assisted sexual abuse may constitute safeguarding concerns and must be referred to the DSL. Staff should not investigate safeguarding concerns beyond what is necessary to establish and report the concern.

16. Mental Health, Wellbeing and Behaviour

RVC recognises that mental health difficulties can affect behaviour and engagement, and that significant changes in behaviour can indicate that a pupil needs additional help or protection. Staff are not expected to diagnose mental health conditions, but they should notice changes in attendance, attainment, engagement, communication or behaviour and respond appropriately.

RVC's virtual pastoral arrangements are intended to ensure that pupils have trusted adults who know them well enough to identify changes and offer support. Where appropriate, RVC will work with parents and carers, health services, social care, local authorities and other professionals. Safeguarding concerns will always be referred through the safeguarding procedure.

17. Critical Incidents and Emergencies

A critical incident is a serious or unexpected event that may significantly affect a pupil or the virtual school community. In a virtual environment, staff may witness or become aware of an emergency through a live lesson, telephone call, message, disclosure or other online contact.

Staff must prioritise immediate safety and safeguarding action. Where there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm, staff should contact the emergency services and follow RVC's emergency and safeguarding procedures. The DSL, Senior Leadership Team and parent or carer should be informed as appropriate. A factual record of the incident, actions taken, decisions, reasons and outcome must be completed promptly.

18. Recording, Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Behaviour incidents and sanctions will be recorded on RVC's approved behaviour system.

Safeguarding concerns will be recorded on the safeguarding system and shared with the DSL or deputy DSL without delay. Records should distinguish behaviour management from safeguarding decision-making while allowing necessary information to be shared between relevant staff.

Information will be handled in accordance with UK data protection law, RVC's privacy and retention arrangements and safeguarding information-sharing requirements. RVC will not promise absolute confidentiality where information needs to be shared to protect a child or another person.

19. Staff Training

Staff will receive induction and ongoing training appropriate to their roles. Training will include positive behaviour support, SEND and neurodiversity, de-escalation, child-on-child abuse, online safety, harmful sexual behaviour, safeguarding reporting, filtering and monitoring responsibilities and the particular challenges of managing behaviour and wellbeing in a virtual school.

20. Linked Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with RVC's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Online Safety Policy, Attendance and Engagement Policy, SEND Policy, Artificial Intelligence Policy, Acceptable Use arrangements, Staff Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure and Data Protection/Privacy Policy.