



Riverside Virtual College

Safeguarding Policy 2026/2027

Consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children

Legislation	Education/ Other
Lead staff member	Abide Zenenga
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Safeguarding Team:

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Key 2026 updates incorporated

- KCSIE 2026 replaces KCSIE 2025 and all staff, including staff who do not work directly with children, are expected to read Part 1 in full.
- Updated early help terminology to reflect universal/community-based early help and targeted Family Help. Strengthened arrangements for child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence.
- Updated language and procedures for the making/sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated images.
- Expanded Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation, modern slavery and serious violence sections.
- Updated mental health, SEND, racism/discriminatory behaviour and other vulnerability content.
- Updated data protection references for the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 and strengthened information-sharing expectations.
- Added the September 2026 statutory information-sharing duty commencing 30 September 2026.
- Added robust DSL cover arrangements and clearer safeguarding availability expectations.
- Strengthened annual filtering and monitoring review requirements and remote/online safeguarding arrangements.
- Added generative AI safeguarding considerations.
- Updated safer recruitment and regulated activity arrangements, including the 2026 removal of the supervision exemption.
- Strengthened transfer of child protection files and receiving-setting risk planning.
- Highlighted the role of Virtual School Heads in attendance and strengthened arrangements for looked-after, previously looked-after, children with a social worker and children in kinship care.
- Updated Birmingham contacts and aligned local working with current CASS/LADO arrangements.

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1. Document control

Policy title: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures – Riverside Virtual College

Version: 2026.1 | Effective from: 1 September 2026 | Review date: September 2027, or sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local arrangements or organisational practice changes.

Policy owner: Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Strategic oversight: Proprietor/Improvement Partners.

This policy replaces the previous Riverside Virtual College safeguarding framework and supersedes references to KCSIE 2021, 2022 and 2025 where those references have been updated by this version.

- The policy applies to safeguarding and child protection arrangements for children and young people under 18. Where Riverside provides education or support to learners aged 18 or over, adult safeguarding and other relevant organisational procedures apply as appropriate.
- This is a virtual/online education setting. Safeguarding arrangements therefore cover risks arising during live online teaching, recorded material, messaging/chat functions, digital platforms, remote learning, home environments and contact with families and professionals.

2. 1. Purpose, scope and safeguarding commitment

Riverside Virtual College (RVC) recognises safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as a collective responsibility. Every member of staff, Improvement Partner, contractor, volunteer and commissioned provider has a role in identifying concerns, listening to children, sharing information appropriately and taking timely action.

The policy is child-centred. Staff must consider the child's wishes and feelings, lived experience, communication needs, developmental stage, vulnerabilities and best interests. No single professional will have a complete picture of a child's circumstances, so effective safeguarding depends on appropriate information sharing and multi-agency working.

Safeguarding includes providing help and support when needs first emerge; protecting children from maltreatment inside or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of mental or physical health or development; ensuring children grow up in safe and effective care; and taking action to enable the best possible outcomes.

- All concerns must be taken seriously. Staff must not wait for a concern to reach a particular threshold before discussing it with the DSL.
- Safeguarding concerns may arise through attendance, engagement, behaviour, wellbeing, disclosures, online interactions, changes in presentation, family circumstances, information from other professionals, or patterns of low-level indicators.
- RVC will promote a culture in which children can report abuse or neglect safely and confidently and know that their views will be listened to and acted upon.

3. 2. Statutory framework and guidance

This policy is based on the current statutory and regulatory framework applying in England and should

be read with the latest local safeguarding arrangements. The core national framework has been updated for September 2026.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE 2026).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People – statutory guidance, including the information sharing duty commencing 30 September 2026.
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools.
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026.
- Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children.
- Virtual School Head role extension: promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements.
- The SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years and relevant Equality Act 2010 duties.
- Prevent duty guidance and Channel arrangements.
- Statutory guidance on female genital mutilation, forced marriage and other relevant forms of honour-based abuse.
- Relevant legislation including the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, Education Act 2002, Education Act 1996, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, Sexual Offences Act 2003, Modern Slavery Act 2015, Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.
- Relevant local Birmingham safeguarding arrangements, including Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, local thresholds/assessment protocols and Right Help, Right Time arrangements.

4. 3. Local safeguarding arrangements and emergency action

RVC will work within the safeguarding arrangements of the child's placing local authority as well as the local arrangements applicable to the setting. Where a child is living outside Birmingham, the DSL will establish the appropriate local safeguarding route and will not assume that Birmingham procedures apply.

Where a child is in immediate danger, staff must contact the emergency services on 999 and inform the DSL/DDSL as soon as practicable. For safeguarding concerns in Birmingham, the Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS) is the single point of contact for professional concerns.

- Birmingham CASS: 0121 303 1888.
- Birmingham emergency/out-of-hours: 0121 675 4806.
- Birmingham LADO: 0121 675 1669; LADO team email: Ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.
- Staff must follow the local authority arrangements for the child's home/placing area where those arrangements are different.

5. 4. Roles and responsibilities

The Principal and Improvement Partners have strategic responsibility for ensuring effective safeguarding arrangements, adequate resources, appropriate policies, safer recruitment, oversight and challenge.

The DSL has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including oversight of referrals,

records, information sharing, training, safeguarding monitoring and the operation of online safeguarding arrangements. The DSL role is explicit in the job description and is provided with sufficient time, status, authority, resources and support.

RVC will maintain robust DSL cover arrangements. When the DSL is unavailable, a trained deputy or other named safeguarding professional must be available and able to receive and act on concerns without delay. A confidential shared safeguarding mailbox or equivalent system may be used where appropriate.

The designated lead for looked-after and previously looked-after children will work with Virtual School Heads, social workers, carers, designated teachers and other professionals to promote educational progress, stability, attendance, wellbeing and aspirations.

All staff are responsible for acting on concerns, recording accurately, following the child protection policy, attending safeguarding training and contributing to multi-agency plans where required.

- The DSL and deputies will have safeguarding training refreshed at least every two years, with knowledge and skills updated regularly and at least annually.
- All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, will read Part 1 of KCSIE 2026 in full and will receive safeguarding/child protection and online safety training at induction, followed by updates at least annually.
- Staff must know how to contact the DSL/DDSL, how to record a concern and what to do if they disagree with a safeguarding decision.
- The Improvement Partner with safeguarding responsibility will provide strategic challenge and monitor the effectiveness of arrangements without becoming operationally involved in individual case management unless appropriate.

6. 5. Early help, Family Help and thresholds

RVC will identify needs as early as possible and use the appropriate local threshold and assessment arrangements. KCSIE 2026 distinguishes universal/community-based early help from targeted early help delivered through Family Help. Staff should be familiar with the local arrangements used by the child's local authority.

Where needs do not meet a statutory social care threshold but additional support is required, the DSL will consider the appropriate Family Help/early support route, with the child's voice central to planning. Where significant harm is suspected or immediate protection is required, the DSL will make the appropriate referral without delay.

Early support plans will identify the concern, the child's views, strengths, desired outcomes, actions, lead professional, review arrangements and escalation route. Plans will be reviewed and escalated when needs persist, increase or change.

7. 6. Listening to children and responding to disclosures

RVC will maintain a culture of listening. Children may communicate through speech, writing, chat, email, behaviour, attendance patterns, images, assistive communication or other methods. Staff must adapt communication to the child's age, developmental stage, SEND and preferred communication method.

When a child discloses a safeguarding concern, staff should listen, remain calm, take the child seriously, avoid leading questions, avoid promising confidentiality, explain what will happen next, record the child's

words as accurately as possible and report the concern immediately to the DSL/DDSL.

Staff should not investigate, confront an alleged perpetrator, seek corroborating evidence independently, or delay a referral while attempting to obtain further information.

- If the concern involves the DSL, report to the Principal or another appropriate senior leader and follow the allegations procedure.
- If the concern involves the Principal/Proprietor, the Chair of Improvement Partners or another independent route must be used and the LADO consulted where the concern meets the relevant threshold.
- If a concern is not acted upon and the child may remain at risk, staff must use the escalation and professional disagreement procedure.

8. 7. Information sharing, confidentiality and record keeping

Safeguarding information must be shared on a need-to-know basis, proportionately and without unnecessary delay. Data protection law does not prevent appropriate information sharing for safeguarding. Consent is not the default requirement where another lawful basis/processing condition permits sharing for safeguarding purposes.

From 30 September 2026, RVC will have regard to the statutory information sharing duty under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004. Staff must be confident to share relevant information where required to safeguard children and must not allow uncertainty about data protection to prevent necessary safeguarding action.

Records must be factual, contemporaneous, clear and secure. They should include concerns, actions, decisions, referrals, discussions, rationale, information shared and outcomes. Records of decisions not to refer must also include the rationale.

Safeguarding records are kept separately from the main academic record, with access restricted appropriately. RVC may use Behaviour Watch or another approved safeguarding recording system. The system must support secure access, audit trails, retention and retrieval.

When a child transfers, the child protection file must be transferred securely and separately from the main pupil file as soon as possible and within the timescales set out in KCSIE 2026. For an in-year transfer, this should be within 5 days; for a transfer at the start of a new term, within the first 5 days of the new term. Receipt should be confirmed.

The DSL will consider whether information should be shared with the receiving provider in advance, particularly where it will help manage safeguarding risks or ensure support is in place from arrival.

9. 8. Looked-after children, previously looked-after children and children with a social worker

RVC recognises the additional vulnerability and educational barriers that may affect children in care, previously looked-after children, children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements.

For looked-after children, RVC will work with the Virtual School Head, social worker, carer and relevant education professionals to maintain a high-quality Personal Education Plan (PEP), support educational progress, promote attendance and address barriers to learning.

Birmingham Virtual School states that PEPs are statutory parts of care planning, should be reviewed

termly, and should reflect the child's voice, educational needs, attendance, wellbeing, SEND and targets. RVC will participate fully in PEP processes and provide accurate information promptly.

For previously looked-after children, RVC will ensure appropriate designated support and will work with the child, family, school/setting and Virtual School where advice or support is required.

For children with a social worker, RVC will recognise that safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked. The DSL and relevant staff will work with social workers and other agencies, share information appropriately and consider the child's educational and pastoral needs.

Where relevant, RVC will support children in kinship care arrangements in line with local authority and Virtual School arrangements.

- The child's voice must be central to PEPs and support planning.
- Attendance, attainment, engagement, wellbeing, SEND, aspirations, transitions and the impact of placement changes should be considered.
- Where a child in care is at risk of suspension/exclusion, the DSL/designated lead should ensure the Virtual School Head and social worker are informed in accordance with local requirements.
- RVC will support stability and continuity of education and ensure safeguarding information is transferred promptly when placements or education providers change.

10. 9. Attendance, engagement and children missing education

Because RVC delivers education remotely, non-attendance or disengagement may be a safeguarding indicator as well as an educational concern. Staff must consider the reason for absence, patterns over time, changes in engagement, family circumstances, communication difficulties, online access, wellbeing and known vulnerabilities.

RVC will maintain accurate attendance records and follow up unexplained absences promptly. The original policy's attendance procedures are retained as operational expectations: attendance is recorded, contacts are notified, referrers can access relevant information, follow-up is logged and repeated non-attendance triggers additional support and safeguarding consideration.

Persistent or sporadic absence may indicate neglect, exploitation, mental health difficulties, domestic abuse, FGM, forced marriage, criminal or sexual exploitation, substance misuse, homelessness or other risk. Staff must consider the wider context rather than treating attendance as an isolated compliance issue.

Where a child may be missing from education, RVC will work with the relevant local authority and follow the statutory Children Missing Education guidance. Reasonable enquiries to establish a child's whereabouts and educational arrangements must be documented.

Virtual School Heads have a role in promoting attendance for children in care and other cohorts within their strategic remit. RVC will cooperate with the relevant Virtual School.

11. 10. Online safety and remote education

Online safety is a core part of RVC's safeguarding arrangements. The child protection policy, online safety arrangements, acceptable use arrangements, curriculum, staff training and parental engagement will operate together.

RVC recognises the 4Cs of online risk: content, contact, conduct and commerce. The online risk assessment will also consider misinformation/disinformation, conspiracy theories, misogyny, racism, self-harm and suicide content, radicalisation/extremism, online grooming, financial scams, phishing, online bullying and harmful sexual content.

Remote teaching must be delivered through approved systems. Staff must maintain professional boundaries, use organisational accounts and platforms, avoid private social media contact, avoid exchanging personal contact details, and follow approved procedures for recording, playback, chat and data sharing.

Where webcams, microphones or other devices are used, this must be consistent with the agreed online learning arrangements and safeguarding risk assessment. Staff must not request inappropriate images or personal information from students.

Parents/carers should be given clear information about online learning expectations, platforms used, who will interact with their child, and the filtering/monitoring arrangements that apply to school systems.

12. 11. Filtering, monitoring, cyber security and generative AI

RVC will maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems for school devices, networks and internet-connected systems used for education. The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring will be reviewed at least annually, with checks covering all relevant devices and locations and records retained.

The SLT member responsible for filtering and monitoring will work with the DSL and IT support/provider. Staff will know how to identify, report and escalate concerns arising from monitoring. RVC will avoid unreasonable over-blocking that prevents legitimate teaching and safeguarding.

Online safety risk assessment will be reviewed at least annually and whenever significant technological or safeguarding changes occur. Cyber security and information security are part of safeguarding.

Generative AI may create or alter safeguarding risks. RVC will assess AI-related risks including generated sexual imagery/deepfakes, impersonation, grooming, harmful content, misinformation, privacy/data protection, cyber risks and inappropriate interaction with AI systems. Staff and students will be taught safe and responsible use where AI is used.

Any incident involving AI-generated nude or semi-nude imagery of a child must be treated as a safeguarding matter. Staff must not forward, download, copy or otherwise distribute such imagery.

13. 12. Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Mental health difficulties can be a safeguarding concern, a consequence of abuse or neglect, or a vulnerability that increases exposure to other harms. Staff must consider safeguarding alongside wellbeing and should not assume that mental health difficulties are purely medical or behavioural issues.

RVC will promote prevention, early identification, early support and access to specialist services. Concerns will be shared with the DSL where there is a safeguarding dimension, significant deterioration, risk of harm or relevant contextual information.

Staff will consider trauma, adversity, family circumstances, online experiences, exploitation, bullying, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, serious violence and other safeguarding factors when responding to changes in mental health.

14. 13. Children with SEND and additional vulnerabilities

RVC recognises that children with SEND may face additional safeguarding barriers. Communication difficulties, reliance on adults, social isolation, difficulty recognising risk, dependence on technology, reduced access to peers and difficulties understanding consequences may increase vulnerability.

Staff will make reasonable adjustments so children with SEND can report concerns, understand safeguarding education and participate in safeguarding planning. The DSL will consider whether communication methods, support needs or disability-related barriers have affected a child's ability to disclose or access help.

Children with SEND may be at increased risk of bullying, grooming and radicalisation online. Online safety education and risk assessment will therefore be tailored to individual needs.

15. 14. Child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and sexual harassment

Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child harmed and the child displaying the harmful behaviour. It can occur online or offline and may include bullying, physical violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, coercive control, initiation/hazing, discriminatory abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and the sharing of nude or semi-nude images.

RVC maintains a zero-tolerance approach to abuse while recognising that children who display harmful behaviour may also have safeguarding or support needs. Responses will protect the child harmed, assess risk, address the behaviour, consider the needs of all children involved and use multi-agency support where appropriate.

Sexual harassment includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and can include sexual comments, jokes, gestures, unwanted touching, sexualised messages, sharing sexual content and online harassment. Staff must report concerns promptly.

All incidents involving the making or sharing of nudes or semi-nudes require a safeguarding response, whether described as consensual or non-consensual. Staff must not view, download, save, forward or ask a child to send such imagery. If imagery is accidentally seen, the staff member must report immediately to the DSL and follow instructions.

16. 15. Child criminal exploitation, county lines, child sexual exploitation and serious violence

RVC recognises that exploitation may be carried out by individuals, organised networks or gangs and may involve coercion, deception, threats, violence, debt, gifts, status, money or other perceived benefits. Children may appear to participate willingly while being exploited.

Indicators can include unexplained possessions, changes in friendship groups, going missing, sudden disengagement, emotional distress, substance misuse, unexplained injuries, changes in online activity, association with known offenders, fear of particular people or locations, and involvement in criminal activity.

County lines involve criminal networks exploiting children to move drugs or money or facilitate other criminal activity. RVC will consider safeguarding, modern slavery and exploitation implications and make referrals as appropriate.

Serious violence risk will be considered in context, including weapon carrying, threats, gang association, exploitation, online influence and changes in behaviour. Where relevant, the DSL will work with police, social care, the Virtual School and other partners.

17. 16. Prevent, radicalisation and extremism

RVC recognises the Prevent duty as part of its safeguarding responsibilities. Concerns about radicalisation, extremist influence or involvement in terrorism must be treated as safeguarding concerns and referred through the DSL/Prevent SPOC arrangements.

There is no single profile of a child who may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Staff should consider the child's circumstances, vulnerabilities, relationships, online activity, exposure to extremist narratives, isolation, identity or belonging concerns, grievances and other contextual factors without stereotyping.

RVC will maintain a Prevent risk assessment, provide appropriate staff training, promote critical thinking and respectful dialogue, and use curriculum opportunities to support resilience and understanding of different beliefs and viewpoints.

Where a Channel referral is considered, the DSL/Prevent SPOC will follow current local arrangements and share relevant information with the appropriate agencies. Channel is a voluntary, multi-agency support process.

18. 17. Domestic abuse, violence against women and girls, honour-based abuse, FGM and forced marriage

RVC recognises domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue and will consider the impact of domestic abuse on children, including coercive control, stalking, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, financial exploitation and the wider effect of living with abuse.

Staff will remain alert to honour-based abuse, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. A child may be at risk even where there has been no disclosure. Staff must not approach family members where doing so could increase risk; the DSL should seek specialist advice and make appropriate referrals.

Where a teacher discovers that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18, the mandatory reporting duty to the police applies in the circumstances set out in law and KCSIE. The DSL should be informed, but mandatory reporting by the teacher must not be delayed by internal discussion.

Forced marriage involving a child is a safeguarding concern. Staff should never mediate with family members or attempt to resolve the situation informally.

19. 18. Modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation

RVC will consider modern slavery and trafficking where a child is exploited for criminal activity, sexual exploitation, labour, domestic servitude or other purposes. Staff should be alert to movement between locations, unexplained absences, control by adults or peers, debt, threats, coercion and changes in behaviour.

Where a child may be a victim of modern slavery or trafficking, the DSL will seek advice and follow the current national and local referral arrangements, including consideration of the National Referral Mechanism where appropriate.

20. 19. Children requiring additional protection

RVC will consider safeguarding needs relating to children with medical conditions, young carers, children in temporary accommodation, children affected by parental imprisonment, children involved in court proceedings, children experiencing homelessness, children with a social worker, children in kinship care and children experiencing other significant changes or adversity.

Support will be personalised and coordinated with relevant professionals. Staff will avoid making assumptions based on a child's family structure, disability, culture, religion, sex, sexual orientation or other characteristics.

21. 20. Safer recruitment and allegations about adults

RVC operates safer recruitment procedures in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and applicable DBS requirements. The Single Central Record will be maintained and checked regularly.

Recruitment processes will include appropriate identity, qualification, employment history, references, right-to-work and safeguarding checks, together with the checks required for the specific role. Online searches may be undertaken as part of due diligence and candidates will be informed.

RVC will apply the 2026 changes to regulated activity, including the removal of the previous supervision exemption. Volunteers and other adults must be checked according to the activity they undertake and the current legal framework.

Concerns or allegations about staff, volunteers, contractors, supply staff or trainee teachers will be managed under Part 4 of KCSIE 2026. The DSL/Principal will consider whether the concern meets the harm threshold and whether the LADO should be contacted.

Low-level concerns about adults must be reported, recorded and reviewed in accordance with RVC's staff code of conduct and low-level concerns procedure. Low-level concerns must not be ignored because they do not meet the harm threshold.

22. 21. Staff conduct and professional boundaries in a virtual setting

Staff must maintain clear professional boundaries and use approved communication systems.

Personal social media contact with students is prohibited unless a formally authorised safeguarding arrangement applies.

Staff must not request personal contact details, personal images, passwords or unnecessary personal information. Staff must not communicate with students through private messaging or personal accounts outside approved arrangements.

Staff must report any concern about their own conduct or the conduct of another adult promptly. RVC will support an open culture in which staff can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

23. 22. Curriculum, safeguarding education and parental engagement

Safeguarding education will be age- and developmentally appropriate and tailored to individual needs, including SEND. It will include online safety and may cover consent, healthy relationships, bullying, exploitation, abuse, self-esteem, emotional literacy, radicalisation, discrimination, misogyny, respectful relationships, personal safety and help-seeking.

Parents/carers will receive information about safeguarding arrangements and online safety. RVC will make clear how concerns can be reported and how the school will respond.

Safeguarding education will be reviewed to reflect emerging risks and lessons learned from incidents, local safeguarding reviews and national guidance.

24. 23. Commissioned services, contractors and third parties

Any organisation or individual commissioned to deliver education, therapy, enrichment or other services to students will be subject to appropriate safeguarding due diligence, safer recruitment/checking, risk assessment, contractual requirements and oversight.

RVC and third-party providers share safeguarding responsibilities. Contracts and service-level arrangements will clearly identify reporting routes, information sharing, online safety expectations and what happens when concerns arise.

25. 24. Quality assurance, monitoring and review

Safeguarding will be monitored through regular DSL reviews, case-file audits, attendance and engagement monitoring, training records, safer recruitment checks, filtering and monitoring reviews, incident analysis, child voice, parent/carers feedback, staff feedback and review of referrals and outcomes.

The Improvement Partners will receive appropriate safeguarding assurance and challenge. Serious incidents, themes and learning will be reported to senior leadership and the governing/oversight body as appropriate.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, technology, service delivery or organisational structure.

RVC will review lessons from complaints, professional disagreements, audits, safeguarding reviews, serious incidents and partner feedback and will update procedures accordingly.

26. 25. Professional disagreement and escalation

Where RVC disagrees with another agency's decision, action or inaction and believes a child may remain at risk, staff must raise the matter promptly through the relevant safeguarding escalation route. Professional disagreement must never delay action where a child may be at risk of harm.

The DSL will record the issue, evidence, discussions, decisions, rationale and outcome. If the matter cannot be resolved at practitioner level, it will be escalated in accordance with the local safeguarding partnership's resolution and escalation procedure.

27. Appendix 1 – What staff should do if worried about a child

1. Recognise the concern – including changes in behaviour, attendance, presentation, online activity, wellbeing or family circumstances.

2. Listen – take the child seriously, use their preferred communication method and do not promise secrecy.

3. Act – report immediately to the DSL/DDSL and make an accurate written record.
4. Escalate – if there is immediate danger, contact 999; if the DSL is unavailable, use the agreed safeguarding cover arrangement; if no action is taken and risk remains, use the escalation procedure.
5. Record – include facts, the child's words where possible, actions, decisions and rationale.

28. Appendix 2 – Safeguarding concern recording standard

Records should state: date/time; child; staff member; source of information; factual description; child's words; context; immediate action; who was informed; decision and rationale; referral details; information shared; follow-up; outcome; review date.

Do not include unnecessary opinion, speculation, diagnostic labels or irrelevant personal information.

29. Appendix 3 – Responding to nudes and semi-nudes

Do not view, download, save, forward or screenshot the image. Do not ask the child to send it again. If it has been seen accidentally, stop viewing and report to the DSL.

Do not ask children involved to disclose unnecessary details about the image. The DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding and multi-agency response.

Do not shame, blame or threaten the child. Consider immediate safety, coercion, exploitation, blackmail, peer pressure, adult involvement and whether there are other safeguarding concerns.

30. Appendix 4 – Virtual school and care cohort checklist Confirm whether the child is looked after, previously looked after, has a social worker or is in kinship care. Identify the relevant Virtual School Head/Virtual School contact and social worker.

Ensure the PEP/EPP is current where applicable and reviewed at least termly.

Capture the child's views, attendance, attainment, wellbeing, SEND, aspirations and barriers to learning. Record agreed actions, responsible adults, timescales and review arrangements.

Consider the impact of placement changes, transitions, exclusions/suspensions and changes in social care arrangements. Share safeguarding information promptly and securely when the child changes provision.

31. Appendix 5 – Online safeguarding checklist

Approved platform and organisational account used.

Professional boundaries maintained.

Chat, recording and playback arrangements understood.

Filtering and monitoring is active and tested.

Staff know how to report online safeguarding concerns.

Students know how to report concerns and block/report harmful contact where relevant.

AI use is risk assessed and does not expose children to inappropriate or unsafe systems.

Remote learning arrangements consider the child's home environment and confidentiality.

32. Appendix 6 – Key contacts

Riverside Virtual College DSL: Leanne Burke.

Deputy DSL: Clare Johnson

Safeguarding Improvement Partner: Fahmida Dor.

Prevent SPOC: Abide Zenenga.

Birmingham CASS: 0121 303 1888.

Birmingham emergency/out-of-hours: 0121 675 4806.

Birmingham LADO: 0121 675 1669; Ladoteam@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.

Emergency services: 999.

For children living outside Birmingham, use the relevant local authority's safeguarding contact route.

33. Appendix 7 – Core related policies and procedures

Attendance and Children Missing Education Policy; Behaviour Policy; Online Safety/Acceptable Use Policy; Staff Code of Conduct; Safer Recruitment Policy; Low-Level Concerns Procedure; Whistleblowing Policy; Anti-Bullying Policy; Equality and SEND Policy; Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy; Data Protection/Information Security Policy; Prevent Risk Assessment; Complaints Policy; Exclusions/Suspension Policy; PEP/Looked-After Children procedures; SEND procedures; Remote Education procedures.

34. Appendix 8 – Key source documents for annual review KCSIE 2026 – Department for Education.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 – Department for Education.

Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People – statutory guidance, updated September 2026. Working Together to Improve School Attendance – statutory guidance, updated July 2026.

Children Missing Education – statutory guidance, updated September 2025.

Promoting the Education of Looked-After and Previously Looked-After Children – statutory guidance.

Virtual School Head role extension guidance for children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements. Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and Right Help, Right Time arrangements. Birmingham Virtual School PEP guidance and current PP+ policy.

DfE filtering and monitoring standards and online safety guidance.

DfE guidance on generative AI in education and data protection.

Relevant Home Office Prevent guidance and Channel arrangements.

Source and implementation note

This revised policy has been prepared by taking into account safeguarding policies and procedures and also updated against the current national and Birmingham sources identified for September 2026. It is intended to be adopted alongside Riverside's operational procedures, safeguarding recording system, local authority arrangements and other linked policies.

Source	Status / date	Used in this policy
Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026	Statutory; in force 1 Sept 2026	Core safeguarding, online safety, training, safer recruitment, allegations and child-on-child abuse
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Statutory; March 2026	Multi-agency working, Family Help, thresholds, local arrangements and child-centred practice
Information Sharing to Safeguard Children and Young People	Statutory; updated 10 Sept 2026; duty from 30 Sept 2026	Information sharing and confidence to share relevant safeguarding information
Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026	Statutory; updated 9 July 2026	Attendance, persistent/severe absence and local authority duties
Children Missing Education	Statutory; updated 8 Sept 2025	CME identification, reasonable enquiries and LA notification
Promoting Education of Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children	Statutory guidance	PEP, designated responsibilities, educational achievement and stability
Virtual School Head role extension	Updated 2 Sept 2025	Children with social workers and children in kinship care
Birmingham Virtual School PEP guidance	Updated 2026	Termly PEP, child voice, attendance, wellbeing, SEND and targets
Birmingham safeguarding arrangements	Current local information checked Sept 2026	CASS, LADO, local safeguarding pathways and escalation