



Riverside Virtual College

Pupil Risk Assessment Policy and Procedures

Legislation	Education/ Other
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1. Statement of intent

Riverside Virtual College (RVC) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and healthy learning and working environment that supports pupils' social, emotional and academic development. This policy sets out how RVC identifies, assesses, manages, records and reviews risks relating to a pupil's safety, safeguarding, behaviour, wellbeing and access to education, including risks arising in a virtual or home-learning environment.

Risk assessment is a structured tool for supporting professional judgement. It does not replace RVC's safeguarding procedures, the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), statutory referrals, emergency action, or individual plans required under other policies. Where information indicates that a child may be suffering or likely to suffer harm, staff must follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy immediately rather than waiting for a scheduled risk-assessment review.

2. Legal and guidance framework

This policy has been reviewed with regard to the following current framework, as applicable to RVC's legal status and provision:

- Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2026, in force from 1 September 2026.
- Working together to safeguard children 2026.
- Information sharing to safeguard children and young people: statutory guidance, in force from September 2026.
- Providing remote education: guidance for schools and Safeguarding and remote education.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Equality Act 2010, including reasonable-adjustment duties.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated risk-management duties where applicable.
- Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools, effective from 1 April 2026, where relevant to any face-to-face provision.

3. Principles

- The welfare and best interests of the child are central to risk assessment and decision-making.
- Risk assessment will be child-centred, strengths-based, proportionate and informed by the pupil's voice wherever possible.
- RVC will consider risks inside and outside the home and online; virtual education does not remove safeguarding responsibilities.
- Risk will be considered in context. Staff will avoid assumptions based on disability, SEND, mental health, race, sex, family circumstances or other protected characteristics.
- Reasonable adjustments and SEND provision will be considered when identifying control measures.
- Parents/carers will normally be involved, but parental involvement will not delay or override safeguarding action where this would place a child at increased risk or conflict with statutory safeguarding procedures.
- Information will be shared lawfully, proportionately and on a need-to-know basis. Safeguarding information may be shared without consent where the law permits or requires this to protect a child.
- A risk rating supports, but never replaces, professional judgement and safeguarding thresholds.

4. When a pupil joins RVC

RVC will gather and review relevant information to identify foreseeable risks and support needs. An individual pupil risk assessment will be completed where identified risks or needs make one necessary. A blanket risk assessment is not a substitute for ordinary safeguarding, SEND or pastoral records.

Sources may include:

- the pupil's views, wishes and feelings;
- parents'/carers' views, where appropriate;
- EHCPs, SEN support plans and reasonable-adjustment information;
- information from the previous/current school or education provider;
- safeguarding and child-protection information transferred through appropriate

channels;

- reports or advice from social care, health, CAMHS, educational psychology, youth justice, attendance or other relevant professionals;
- known attendance, engagement, behaviour, online-safety or welfare information;
- professional assessments and RVC staff observations.

Where information is incomplete, staff will record what is not known and what action is being taken to obtain it. Lack of complete information must not delay urgent safeguarding action.

5. Areas of risk to consider

The assessment should consider only risks relevant to the individual pupil. Depending on circumstances these may include:

- self-harm, suicidal ideation or other immediate threats to life or safety;
- abuse, neglect, domestic abuse, coercive control or unsafe home circumstances;
- child-on-child abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour;
- exploitation, including child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, trafficking, county lines or modern slavery;
- online harm, grooming, cyberbullying, unsafe contact, sextortion, sharing of sexual imagery or harmful content;
- missing episodes, unexplained absence, persistent non-attendance or sudden disengagement from online learning;
- mental-health or emotional-wellbeing concerns where these create or indicate a safeguarding or access risk;
- violence, aggression, threats, weapons or serious behavioural incidents;
- substance misuse or offending behaviour;
- radicalisation concerns, managed through RVC's Prevent/safeguarding procedures where applicable;
- SEND, disability, communication, sensory or medical needs that may affect safety or require reasonable adjustments;
- technology, privacy or home-environment barriers that affect safe participation in remote education;
- risks connected with any face-to-face visit, examination, activity, transport or venue.

6. RVC risk-assessment process

1. ESTABLISH THE CONTEXT: Gather relevant information; identify the pupil's strengths, needs, circumstances, protective factors and the context in which concerns arise. For virtual pupils, consider home and online contexts without making assumptions about the home environment.

2. IDENTIFY THE RISK: Describe the specific foreseeable harm, who may be affected, known triggers or warning signs, and existing protective factors. Avoid vague labels such as simply 'high risk'.

3. ANALYSE THE RISK: Consider likelihood, potential severity, frequency/immediacy, vulnerability, protective factors and the effectiveness of existing controls. Consider whether

the concern meets a safeguarding or statutory referral threshold.

4. EVALUATE AND DECIDE: Determine the level of risk after existing controls and decide what further action is required, who is responsible and by when. The DSL must be involved where the risk includes a safeguarding concern.

5. RESPOND / CONTROL: Implement proportionate measures designed to reduce risk while maintaining education, dignity, inclusion and reasonable adjustments. Emergency or safeguarding action takes priority.

6. RECORD AND SHARE: Record the rationale, evidence, pupil/parent views where appropriate, actions, responsible persons, review date and relevant information sharing.

7. REVIEW: Review after any significant incident, material change, new information, change in placement/provision, or at the scheduled review date. Do not wait until the end of term if risk changes.

7. Risk ratings and escalation

RVC uses Low, Medium and High ratings as an internal management tool. The rating should reflect residual risk after current controls and must include a written rationale. The label alone must never determine safeguarding action.

Rating	Indicative meaning	Minimum response	Review
Low	Risk is currently controlled; harm is unlikely or impact is limited with existing measures.	Maintain controls; identify responsible staff; continue ordinary monitoring.	At planned review and sooner if circumstances change.
Medium	Credible risk requiring additional controls, closer monitoring or coordinated support.	Named lead; action plan; consider DSL/SENCO and multi-agency input according to the nature of the risk.	Set a proportionate review date; sooner after incidents or new information.
High	Serious, imminent or insufficiently controlled risk, or circumstances requiring urgent safeguarding consideration.	Immediate senior/DSL review; implement urgent controls; consider children's social care, police, health/emergency services or other statutory referral as appropriate. Create a Higher Needs Risk Assessment where	Frequent review set by the lead/DSL; immediately after significant change.

		this adds value.	
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A 'high' rating is not a substitute for referral. If a child is in immediate danger or requires emergency medical attention, staff must contact the appropriate emergency service and follow RVC safeguarding procedures.

8. Higher Needs Risk Assessment

Where risk is High, complex, multi-factorial or requires detailed coordination, RVC may create a separate Higher Needs Risk Assessment overseen by the DSL and/or a designated senior leader. It should identify the specific risk, triggers, protective factors, controls, contingency/emergency actions, responsible persons, information-sharing arrangements and review frequency.

Where other statutory or professional plans already exist, RVC should coordinate with them rather than creating conflicting plans. This may include an EHCP, child in need/child protection plan, family help plan, safety plan, healthcare plan or professional mental-health risk/safety plan.

9. Preventative and control measures

- eliciting and recording the pupil's views, wishes and feelings;
- identifying trusted/key staff and clear contact arrangements;
- regular pastoral check-ins and feedback;
- involving parents/carers where appropriate and safe;
- reasonable adjustments and SEND strategies;
- an individual support, safety or engagement plan where required;
- curriculum or timetable adaptations that maintain appropriate educational ambition while reducing identified risk;
- planned breaks or changes of activity where appropriate;
- clear expectations and positive behaviour support;
- safe arrangements for live lessons, messaging and online contact;
- support for digital access and accessibility barriers;
- multi-agency working with social care, health/CAMHS, attendance services, youth justice, the local authority, Virtual School Head or other professionals where relevant;
- supervision, guidance and debrief for staff working with pupils presenting complex risk;
- post-incident review focused on learning, support and prevention rather than blame;
- contingency arrangements explaining what staff, pupil and parent/carer should do if risk escalates.

10. Virtual-learning-specific safeguards

- RVC will have systems for identifying unexplained absence or disengagement and will consider whether this may indicate a welfare or safeguarding concern.
- Where RVC's model includes pupils learning remotely on a day-to-day basis, leaders will define proportionate welfare/engagement checks and escalation routes; remote-education guidance highlights the need to consider whether pupils are safe at home as well as engaging with education.

- Staff delivering online education remain subject to RVC's staff behaviour/code of conduct and safeguarding procedures.
- Online concerns arising during lessons, messages or platform activity must be recorded and referred in the same way as concerns identified face to face.
- Staff must use approved systems and follow professional-boundary and privacy expectations for virtual contact.
- Risk controls should not require unnecessary surveillance of the pupil or home. Any monitoring must have a clear safeguarding/educational purpose, be proportionate and comply with data-protection requirements.

11. Safeguarding and information sharing

All staff must read KCSIE 2026 Part One in full and follow RVC's safeguarding procedures. Any member of staff who has a concern about a child must act on it immediately in accordance with those procedures.

Risk assessments containing safeguarding information are confidential safeguarding records and should be stored securely with access limited to those who need the information. Relevant information should be shared with safeguarding partners and other professionals where necessary and lawful to help, support or protect the child. Consent is not required where seeking it would place a child at risk, cause unreasonable delay, or where another lawful basis permits sharing.

12. Incidents, exclusions/suspensions and restrictive intervention

Significant incidents should trigger a review of the assessment where they change the known risk, controls or circumstances. The risk assessment may cross-reference incident records but should not become a duplicate behaviour log.

Suspension or exclusion must not be used as a risk-control measure outside the College's lawful behaviour/exclusion procedures. Where restrictive intervention or reasonable force could become relevant during face-to-face provision, RVC will follow the DfE guidance effective from 1 April 2026, including the expectation that restrictive intervention is not used as punishment and that planning considers individual needs and foreseeable risks.

13. Roles and responsibilities

- Proprietor/Improvement Partners: provide appropriate oversight and assurance that safeguarding and risk-management arrangements are effective.
- Headteacher: ensures this policy is implemented, resourced, reviewed and aligned with related policies.
- DSL and deputies: lead safeguarding decisions, referrals, information sharing and safeguarding aspects of individual risk management.
- SENCO/SEND lead: advises on SEND, EHCP duties and reasonable adjustments and helps ensure disability/SEND is not treated as a behaviour risk in itself.
- Pastoral/teaching staff: contribute relevant evidence, implement agreed controls, monitor changes and report safeguarding concerns immediately.
- All staff: remain alert to indicators of harm and follow safeguarding procedures; no

staff member should rely solely on a RAG rating where they have a concern.

14. Recording, review and quality assurance

- Each assessment will record date, author/lead, evidence considered, identified risks and protective factors, rating rationale, controls, responsible persons and review arrangements.
- Pupil views and parent/carer views will be recorded where obtained, including any significant disagreement.
- Assessments will be reviewed at least termly where they remain active, but sooner whenever new information, an incident or changed circumstances indicate this is necessary.
- High or complex assessments will be quality-assured by the DSL and/or SLT at a frequency proportionate to risk.
- Closed assessments will be retained in accordance with RVC's safeguarding/data-retention arrangements.