

## Safeguarding Policy Statement

<b>Policy Review</b>	
Review Schedule	Annual
Reviewed by:	Trust Board (Standards)
Accepted by:	Local Governing Bodies
Date of Review:	October 2023
Date of Next Review:	October 2024

### **Taken from the Hertfordshire Model Policy**

The Ridgeway Learning Partnership is committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers. Policies have been written and reviewed with due regard to the Equalities Act 2010.

### **Introduction**

We believe that students thrive in a happy, secure and caring environment. It is an essential part of a school ethos that the values of peace, love and caring for others should be core values that we respect and agree.

### **Scope**

The RLP is at the heart of the community delivering an inclusive education to students of all ages. Our mission is to embrace challenge and to celebrate success in all that we do by striving for every learner to reach their full potential. The culture that we have in our schools means that they each retain their distinctiveness but learn and grow together and remain collectively responsible for providing all students with exciting and inspiring opportunities.

### **For Church Schools in the Ridgeway Learning Partnership the following biblical narrative applies:**

*Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counsellors there is safety.*  
Proverbs 11:14

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**  
**Ridgeway Learning Partnership**

**This Policy will be adopted by the Trust’s individual schools and Tring Sport and Leisure (TSLL)**

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Trust annually.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Trust on 2 October 2023

It is due for review in October 2024 (up to 12 months from the above date).

Signature ...Sharon Wilson..... Date ...2 October 2023.....

Senior Executive Leader

Signature .....Julian Crane..... Date ....2 October 2023...

Chair of Trustees

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## INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'. This policy sets out the schools' responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

### Terminology:

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to:

- **protecting children from maltreatment**
- **preventing impairment of children's health or development**
- **ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care**

The aim of **safeguarding** is to enable children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

### What's the difference between Safeguarding and Child Protection?

**Safeguarding** is an 'umbrella' term that incorporates child protection. **Child Protection** is the process and activities undertaken to fulfil statutory obligations to protect specific children who have been identified as suffering, or at risk of significant harm. All agencies and individuals should proactively **safeguard and promote** the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced. This policy must be read in conjunction with the current Keeping Children Safe in Education - Sept 2023. This is referenced in detail within the Child Protection Policy.

**This policy is available on the Trust and schools' website, intranet and is included in the staff handbooks.**

## 2. PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

Our Principles:

- The welfare of children, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carrying out school activities
- All children will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, ability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation and culture
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of children and report any concerns immediately

We aim:

- To provide all staff (employed, contracted and visiting) with the necessary information/training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- To provide parents, carers and children with information about school arrangements to keep children safe.
- To ensure safe and consistent best practice across the school
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding children

## 3. FRAMEWORK

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- **Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Interagency Procedures Manual**  
[http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_manage\\_alleg.html](http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_manage_alleg.html)

- **Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006**  
Statutory guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, independent schools, academies and free schools, DfE (February 2015)  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006)

- **Education Act 2002**  
**Section 175** – requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.  
**Section 157** and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 - require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Guidance for Safer Working Practice</b>, Safer Recruitment Consortium (September 2015)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners</b>, DfE (March 2015)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Keeping Children Safe in Education</a>, DfE 2023</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Sexual Offences Act</b> , HM Government (2003)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Teachers’ Standards 2012</b>, DfE (2011)</li> </ul> <p>These standards set the minimum requirements for teachers’ practice and conduct. Teachers, including Headteachers should safeguard children’s wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>What to do if you're worried a child is being abused</b>, DfE (March 2015)</li> </ul> <p>Non statutory advice which helps everyone who works with children to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action &lt;insert here where a copy of this can be found in the school &gt;</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children</b>, DfE (2018)</li> </ul>

**RELEVANT ASSOCIATED POLICIES**  
 In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this policy should also be read in conjunction with other associated policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection - references made in this policy for Covid -19 actions and how students are protected during lockdown/remote learning.
- Complaints procedure
- Educational visits including overnight stays
- Online Safety
- Harassment and discrimination including racial abuse
- Health and Safety including site security
- Information sharing
- Intimate Care
- Managing Allegations
- Medicines and medical policy , including first aid
- Physical Intervention and positive handling
- Preventing Extremism & Radicalisation Policy
- Recruitment & Selection
- Safe working practice
- SEN
- Staff Behaviour/Code of Conduct
- Whistle-blowing

## 5. SAFEGUARDING THEMES

### Anti-Bullying

Our schools recognise the right of our children and young people to develop with confidence in an environment that is safe and free from the emotional and physical distress that can be seen as a result of bullying. It is the responsibility of Ridgeway Learning Partnership to ensure that procedures are in place that will monitor and address anti-bullying issues. There is a more detailed Anti-Bullying Policy available on the schools' website.

### Attendance

In accordance with the Trust's Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The school, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME) and off-rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

### Child Protection

There is a detailed Child Protection Policy operating within the Trust. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the RLP website. It is the Trust's duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the policy addressed immediately.

All Child Protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures. A copy of these procedures can be found at [www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk](http://www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk).

Children's Services telephone number **03001234043 (including out of hours)**

### Complaints

The Trust has a Complaints Procedure available to parents, pupils and staff who wish to report concerns. This can be found on the RLP website.

All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff.

## Confidentiality

The Trust's Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy is available to parents on request.

All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. The DSP will normally obtain consent from the child/parent to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a child), the DSP may share information without consent and will record the reason for this. Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. The School will retain this information on the pupil file and transfer to the next school/archive the information in line with The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 and The Information and Records Management Society. The school will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil. Please see Hertfordshire's Pupil Safeguarding Records Guidance at [www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child\\_protection/policy/local.shtml#pupilsafe](http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/policy/local.shtml#pupilsafe) for further information.

## Curriculum

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through Life Skills Programme/PSHE and through all aspects of school life.

The school is committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children know that we have senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection and they are made aware of who these persons are. We inform children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Subjects such as Personal, Social and Health Education discuss relevant safeguarding issues with the children. Please see the e-safety section of this policy for further details on this topic.

## Online Safety

We have an Online Safety policy which can be found on the Trust website.

Our policy includes how we teach children to stay safe when using the internet in and out of school- including the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. Cyber-bullying by children, via texts, emails and other forms of

social media, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

The Trust will ensure that appropriate filtering methods are in place to ensure that children are safe from all types of inappropriate and unacceptable materials, including terrorist and extremist material.

### **Digital images:**

The use of digital images in schools is a complex area. The school has a clear and sufficiently detailed policy that covers the taking and use of digital images and video of children and takes steps to ensure that it is understood and enforced.

The Trust recognises the importance and usefulness of including the children's use of technology within the classroom, such as a Chromebooks. With this comes lots of opportunities for children across all age ranges to explore and learn in an explorative and creative way. The use of a technology item, such as a Chromebook is likely to have a camera and children will be using the camera as part of their learning experience. However, the use of Chromebooks can also present risks if children are left to use the equipment in an unsupervised environment. It is therefore understood that the school will ensure that all students within the school are educated to become responsible digital citizens and know how to behave safely online.

Staff and children sign ICT Acceptable User Agreement. For staff, this includes a section on the use of digital images and clarification about the position regarding the use of personal mobile phones/cameras for taking pictures. Where volunteers are supporting school staff, they should abide by the same rules as school staff as far as is reasonable.

## **Health and Safety**

We have a Health & Safety Policy which demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the children when on RLP premises and when undertaking activities out of school under the supervision of our staff. At all times there has to be appropriate staffing levels and when off-site, appropriate and agreed pupil:adult ratios are maintained. The lead adult always assesses visits/trips as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Headteacher.

Each school has lone working risk assessments in place and procedures for staff where there is a security risk due to the need to work alone; staff at high risk will receive appropriate training.

A copy of the Health and Safety Policy is available on our website.

## **Inclusion and Diversity**

Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social



exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Our Trust's ethos promotes and accepts the differences between all students and adults. In practice, this is about ensuring the inclusion of individuals and treating them fairly and equally, no matter the diversity of their race, gender, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Promoting equality and diversity in education is essential for both teachers and children. The aim is to create a classroom environment where all children can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not 'different' in a negative way.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023), to ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will also give special consideration to additionally vulnerable groups (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy), for example, children with disabilities or special educational needs. Special consideration is also given in the provision of safeguarding information and resources in accessible formats for students and adults with communication needs.

### **Managing Allegations Against Staff & Volunteers**

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment that secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the students at our school. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour and actions of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our students and to ensure that the adults in our schools/Trust are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Procedures and Part 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2023) are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Hertfordshire LADO Service can be contacted on **0300 123 4043**.

### **Partnership with Other Services**

Our schools recognise that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies that are partners of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

### **Partnership with Parents**

The Trust is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of students and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

The Trust shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless doing so may place a child at risk of harm. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with the schools' Designated Senior Lead (*DSL*)

### **Safer Recruitment and Selection**

Our recruitment process selects, screens, trains and supervises staff and volunteers so that the appointment of unsuitable people can be deterred and rejected from working with children.

A copy of the Trust's Safer Recruitment policy is available on request.

The Trust has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer ( LADO) and/or HR.

The RLP also adhere to the guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2015 regarding persons who are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

### **Safer Working Practice**

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our students are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The Teachers' Standards (DfE,2011) are augmented by standards of personal and professional conduct e.g. ethics and behaviour, in and out of school. Staff are expected to 'uphold public trust in the profession by showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability' .

All staff will be provided with a copy of our school's code of conduct/staff behaviour policy/handbook at induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

### **Abuse of Position Of Trust:**

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the behaviour is consensual.

### **Security**

The security measures put into place at our schools have taken into account the need to balance the importance of a welcoming environment with ensuring the safety of all our children and staff. A security risk assessment will be completed and reviewed annually (or earlier if deemed necessary). The findings will be used in the review of this security policy and shared with the school's Leadership Team and appropriate Governors.

RLP premises have CCTV coverage which is used to protect the staff and students and prevent any unauthorised access. Please read Appendix 1, attached to this policy.

### **Access to buildings:**

The Trust will take all reasonable efforts to control access to the buildings and grounds of the Trust to prevent unauthorised access to students and ensure the personal safety of staff.

### **Visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel:**

The control of visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel is a fundamental part of our site security policy for the safeguarding of both people and property.

Where the Trust transfers control or otherwise allows the use of school premises to external bodies (such as sports clubs) or service providers during or out of school hours, we will ensure that these bodies or providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures and that there are arrangements in place to coordinate with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies or providers. See Letting's Policy for each RLP school for revised wording to meet the KCSIE Sept 2022 guidance.

*If a third party is providing an activity or service within the Trust's premises:*

*The local governing of each school should make sure that:*

- *The third party has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place (they should inspect these as needed) eg: DBS certificates.*
- *There are arrangements in place to liaise with you about these where appropriate eg: show them to reception staff before entering the rest of the school.*
- *Any transfer of control agreement (such as a lease or hire agreement):*
  - *Includes safeguarding requirements as a condition of using your school premises.*

- *States that you will terminate the agreement if they fail to comply with the RLP safeguarding policy.*

*This is set out in paragraphs 155 and 156 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#).*

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into our schools. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitors badge whilst on school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

Our schools will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens school security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the school site.

### **Appendix 1 - Use of CCTV at Schools - CCTV Statement**

This statement sets out the appropriate actions and procedures, which must be followed to comply with the Data Protection Act in respect of the use of CCTV (closed-circuit television) surveillance systems managed by the Trust.

The CCTV System includes static cameras and is used for the purpose of:

- The prevention, detection and investigation of criminal activity;
- The security of the premises;
- Safeguarding the safety of students, staff and visitors

### **Responsible Person**

The person who has been appointed to oversee the system and procedures is:

- The Operations Manager – Mr Lee Whippey, Business Manager - Mrs Mandy Lyons, Office Manager - Mrs Trudi Fryer

### **Images recorded**

Signs are displayed to notify all users that CCTV is in operation

- The images that are filmed are held in a secure location and can only be accessed by those who are authorised to do so.
- Digital media is used to record images.
- The system has been set up to provide good quality images.
- Every camera records simultaneously and the images are stored on the server for a period of 30 days. After that time, all images are erased apart from any which related to an incident subject to an ongoing investigation, which will be burnt onto a disc.
- Routine checks are made to ensure that the system is operating in accordance with the terms of this policy, and that information relating to the recordings (date, time etc) are accurate; these details are entered into the CCTV control held in the server room and the Operations Manager's office. The person who operates the system

fills in the log sheet. These logs will then be collected and securely stored by the Site Manager every month.

### **Use of disclosure of images**

Downloading images is strictly controlled and limited to the following staff:

- DSLs and Headteachers - **View and download**
- Senior Leadership Team, Operation's Manager - **View Only**

All saved data must be handed to the Headteacher or a member of the SLT – key staff are trained to understand the administrative regime to control the use of the images.