

A vertical bar with a rainbow gradient, matching the school's branding, is positioned on the left side of the page.

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

2025 - 2026

Riffa Views International School (RVIS) - Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Prepared By SLT:

Michael Donaldson - School Principal

Noora Al Khalifa - Head of Secondary

Tanya Surawski - Head of Primary

Zahi Wehbbe - Head of *Innovation Hub*

Jason Russell - Head of Pastoral Care

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
Policy Reference	Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy - RVIS -25-022
Date Adopted	August 2025
Last Review Date	August 2025
Next Scheduled Revision (yearly)	April 2026

RVIS Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Background:

Riffa Views International School (RVIS) recognises its moral and legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We are committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and supportive environment in which every child is respected, valued, and protected from neglect, as well as physical, emotional, sexual, and peer-related abuse.

Child protection is an integral part of RVIS's broader safeguarding responsibilities. All staff, including teachers, administrators, support personnel, and school leaders, are expected to share this commitment through their attitudes, decisions, and actions. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in the school community.

RVIS is dedicated to ensuring that any concerns about the well-being of a student are addressed promptly and appropriately. This procedure provides guidance for responding to potential abuse, with all suspicions reported immediately to a designated Child Protection Officer and documented via a referral form. The school continually reviews and updates its safeguarding policies and procedures in response to experience, implementation learning, and any relevant external reviews or case findings. Parents and guardians are informed of this policy, which is accessible on the school website.

The safety, security, and well-being of every student remain the highest priority at RVIS.

Child Protection, Safeguarding, and Promoting Student Well-Being

At RVIS, **child protection, safeguarding, and promoting student well-being** means protecting students from harm, preventing impairment to their health or development, ensuring they grow up in a safe and supportive environment, and taking action to help every student achieve the best possible outcomes.

Safeguarding is a broad concept that covers all measures taken to ensure the safety, welfare, and well-being of students under the age of 18.

Staff should understand that child protection and safeguarding are not isolated responsibilities but integral to many areas of school life. Relevant policies include, but are not limited to:

- **Technology and Internet Use Policy** – Guidelines for responsible and safe use of digital devices and online resources.
- **Student Behaviour and Consequences Policy** – Expectations for conduct and corresponding disciplinary measures.
- **Anti-Bullying and Peer Respect Policy** – Strategies to prevent, address, and respond to bullying.
- **Health, Safety, and Well-Being Policy** – Procedures to ensure a safe and healthy school environment.
- **Admissions and Attendance Policy** – Rules regarding enrollment, attendance, and punctuality.
- **Staff Professional Conduct Policy** – Standards of behaviour and ethical responsibilities for all school personnel.

By embedding safeguarding principles across these areas, RVIS ensures a comprehensive approach to student safety, welfare, and personal development.

RVIS Child Protection Team

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Jason Russell, Head of Pastoral Care (Whole School)

Child Protection Team

Elementary School	Middle & High School
Amira Nawar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Psychologist - Head of Counseling - Elementary School Counselor Tanya Surawski <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principal of Elementary School Dizzy Airoidi & Amna Dawani <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary School Learning Support 	Safa Khalaf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Middle & High School Counselor Noora Al Khalifa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Middle & High School Principal Nour Geha <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary School Learning Support

Responsibilities:

Safeguarding Yourself – Guidelines for Staff

- Use staff-designated restrooms only.
- Maintain professional communication with students outside school hours (e.g., via Toddle or official school email).
- Do not share your personal phone number with students.
- Avoid one-on-one meetings with students behind closed doors; ensure visibility or have another adult present when possible.
- When modeling or demonstrating to a student, always seek verbal consent before any physical contact (e.g., “I’m going to adjust your hand slightly—is that okay?”).
- If unsure about a situation, consult a colleague or supervisor to ensure best safeguarding practices are followed.

Safeguarding Students

- All RVIS staff and volunteers working with students are mandated reporters.
- Know and be able to identify members of the Child Protection Team.
- Safeguarding and child protection are shared responsibilities—every adult in the school community plays a role.

Child Safety and Welfare

I. Responsibilities of School Leadership

A. In accordance with the principles outlined in Sections II through IV, the Head of School is responsible for developing clear procedures for reporting suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

B. Similarly guided by these principles, school leadership shall establish and regularly review protocols for RVIS’s response to suspected child abuse and neglect.

C. School leaders may implement academic or extracurricular initiatives aimed at raising awareness and fostering understanding of child abuse and neglect among students, parents, faculty, and administrators.

D. School leadership shall ensure that all relevant procedures and guidelines are communicated annually to faculty and staff.

II. Responsibilities of School Staff

A. For the purposes of this policy, *school staff* refers to all employees of the school, including, but not limited to, teachers, nurses, administrators, counselors, support staff, and teaching assistants.

B. Any member of the school staff who has reasonable cause to suspect that a student may be at risk of abuse or neglect—or who has direct evidence of such abuse or neglect—is required to report their concerns to the school principal or school counselor (the designated Child Protection Officers) without delay, preferably within 24 hours.

C. While not obligated to do so, individuals outside the school staff (e.g., parents or guardians) who have reason to believe that a student may be at risk of, or is experiencing, abuse or neglect are strongly encouraged to share their concerns promptly with the principal or school counselor.

III. Confidentiality

A. All RVIS staff members are expected to uphold the privacy and dignity of students and their families in all cases involving suspected or confirmed abuse or neglect.

B. The Head of School shall ensure that all records and information related to such cases are treated with strict confidentiality. Access to this information shall be restricted to individuals who have a legitimate need to know in order to implement this policy, provide appropriate medical care, or assess and respond to situations where there is a reasonable concern of ongoing or increased risk of abuse or neglect.

IV. Policy and Procedures Alignment with Bahraini Law and External Organisations

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility and a cornerstone of our commitment to student wellbeing. Our safeguarding procedures are proactive, preventive, and responsive—aligned with both international best practices and the **Kingdom of Bahrain’s Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) regulations**. We ensure that all students are protected from harm and have access to safe, trusted adults and clear reporting channels.

Communication with the Ministry of Education (MoE) & the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)

RVIS maintains transparent and timely communication with the Ministry of Education in accordance with national child protection laws and school licensing requirements. The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** oversees all formal communications and reporting processes involving the Ministry.

Key Protocols:

- The DSL ensures **timely referrals** are made to the MoE when there are **reasonable concerns of abuse, neglect, or significant harm**.
- Written reports follow **official Ministry templates** and guidelines.
- **Immediate reporting** occurs for high-risk or urgent cases through direct communication with the MoE and MoSD.
- Records of all reports, follow-ups, and directives from the Ministry are maintained confidentially in secure safeguarding files.
- When cases involve RVIS personnel, the school follows a **dual reporting process**—conducting an internal review while formally reporting to the Ministry.

Coordination with External Support Providers

In safeguarding matters, RVIS actively collaborates with external agencies to ensure holistic and sustained support for students and families.

These may include:

- **Child protection specialists** from the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Social Development
- **Counseling and mental health providers** licensed in Bahrain
- **Medical and clinical professionals** for assessment and care
- **Legal or police authorities**, where safety or legal action is required

Coordination Steps:

- The DSL facilitates contact with external providers in consultation with school leadership and, when appropriate, with parent/guardian consent.
- Case meetings and planning sessions are held jointly with external agencies to ensure aligned action.
- Ongoing communication is maintained with all involved professionals to monitor safety, progress, and support needs.

Commitment to Confidentiality and Student-Centered Practice

RVIS ensures that:

- Safeguarding referrals are handled with **discretion, sensitivity, and confidentiality**
- All actions are **in the best interest of the child**
- Communication with families is transparent and respectful, unless doing so places the student at further risk

How Abuse and Neglect are Defined

Riffa Views International School (RVIS) acknowledges four primary categories of abuse and neglect, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN):

- **Physical Abuse**
- **Sexual Abuse**
- **Emotional and Psychological Abuse**
- **Neglect**

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that causes, or is likely to cause, harm to the child's health, development, survival, or dignity. This includes, but is not limited to: beating, hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, burning, scalding, poisoning, dragging, pushing, pulling, or suffocating. In many cases, physical abuse occurs under the guise of discipline within the home.

Possible Indicators of Physical Abuse

The Child:

- Has unexplained injuries such as burns, bruises, bite marks, broken bones, or black eyes
- Appears fearful of the caregiver or becomes visibly distressed when it is time to go home
- Flinches or shrinks away from adult approach
- Reports being harmed by a caregiver
- Exhibits aggressive behavior towards animals or pets

The Parent or Legal Guardian:

- Provides explanations for the child's injuries that are inconsistent, unconvincing, or absent altogether
- Describes the child in extremely negative terms (e.g., referring to the child as "evil")

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse refers to the involvement of a child in sexual activity that they do not fully understand, are not developmentally prepared for, cannot give informed consent to, or that violates legal or societal norms.

Such abuse may be perpetrated by adults or by other children who, due to their age, maturity, or authority, hold a position of power, trust, or responsibility over the victim.

Possible Indicators of Sexual Abuse

The Child:

- Experiences difficulty walking or sitting
- Becomes suddenly unwilling to change clothes for physical education or participate in physical activities
- Suffers from frequent nightmares or bedwetting
- Exhibits unusually advanced, explicit, or inappropriate sexual behavior or knowledge
- Displays a sudden change in eating habits
- Forms attachments quickly with strangers or unfamiliar adults
- Becomes pregnant or contracts a sexually transmitted infection, especially if under the age of 14
- Runs away from home

The Parent or Legal Guardian:

- Is overly protective or restricts the child's interactions with others, particularly those of the opposite sex
- Appears secretive or socially isolated
- Displays controlling or possessive behavior within the family

Emotional and Psychological Abuse

Emotional or psychological abuse refers to repeated or significant failures by a parent or caregiver to provide a nurturing, supportive, and developmentally appropriate environment for a child. These actions—or

inactions—can severely impact a child’s physical or mental health, as well as their emotional, moral, and social development.

This form of abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- Excessive restriction of movement
- Persistent belittling, blaming, threatening, or frightening behavior
- Discrimination, ridicule, and rejection
- Verbal humiliation
- Ignoring the child’s presence or emotional needs
- Unjustified invasions of privacy

Possible Indicators of Emotional and Psychological Abuse

The Child:

- Exhibits extreme behaviors, such as excessive compliance, passivity, aggression, or demanding behavior
- Acts either overly mature (e.g., parenting other children) or overly immature (e.g., rocking or head-banging)
- Shows delays in physical or emotional development
- Has attempted suicide
- Reports feeling unattached or emotionally disconnected from their parent or caregiver

The Parent or Legal Guardian:

- Regularly blames, belittles, or criticizes the child
- Shows little concern for the child’s well-being and refuses support or intervention
- Demonstrates overt rejection of the child

- Engages in emotional neglect, such as ignoring the child's emotional needs, failing to seek necessary psychological care, or allowing inappropriate behaviors such as substance use

Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic physical, emotional, or developmental needs within their home environment. It may occur in various forms, including:

- **Physical Neglect:** Not providing adequate food, shelter, clothing, or supervision.
- **Medical Neglect:** Ignoring necessary medical, mental health, or hygiene needs.
- **Emotional Neglect:** Failing to support a child's emotional wellbeing or exposing them to harmful environments.
- **Educational Neglect:** Not ensuring regular school attendance or meeting learning needs.

Possible Indicators of Neglect

The Child:

- Appears consistently unwashed or undernourished
- Is frequently absent from school without explanation
- Lacks necessary medical or dental care, including immunizations or corrective eyewear
- Wears clothing that is inappropriate for the weather
- Expresses reluctance or fear about returning home
- Uses alcohol or other drugs
- Reports having no adult available at home to provide care
- Displays behaviors that, while not definitive on their own, may indicate underlying neglect

The Parent or Legal Guardian:

- Appears emotionally indifferent toward the child
- Shows little interest in the child's academic performance or well-being
- Fails to respond to repeated communications from the school

- Leaves the child without appropriate care or a designated guardian for 24 hours or more
- Cannot be reached in the event of an emergency

Exploitation

Exploitation refers to the deliberate use of a child for personal gain, profit, or advantage, often through the abuse of power, trust, or vulnerability. It may be sexual, financial, or involve coercing a child into labor, criminal activity, or other harmful situations. Such actions violate the child's rights and compromise their safety, wellbeing, and development.

Possible Indicators of Exploitation

The Child:

- Consistently poor hygiene or inappropriate clothing for weather conditions
- Frequent hunger or hoarding/scavenging for food
- Untreated medical or dental issues
- Persistent tiredness, listlessness, or poor concentration
- Frequent unexplained absences from school or chronic lateness
- Developmental delays or failure to thrive
- Displaying withdrawn, anxious, or overly compliant behavior

The Parent or Legal Guardian:

- Indifference or lack of concern for the child's wellbeing
- Failure to provide adequate supervision or leaving the child unattended
- Unwillingness or inability to address the child's medical, educational, or emotional needs
- Substance misuse that impairs caregiving ability
- Justifying the child's absence from school without valid reason
- Consistently blaming the child for problems or showing little positive interaction

Bullying/Harassment

Riffa Views International School (RVIS) is committed to providing a learning and working environment that is safe, welcoming, inclusive, caring, and responsive for all students and staff. Bullying and harassment of any kind are regarded as serious violations of this commitment and are considered major breaches of conduct.

Such behavior will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with school policy. Any conduct that meets the definition of bullying or harassment, is strictly prohibited across all educational settings.

Policy Foundation and Scope

- This Policy is grounded in research-based best practices and the ISCA (International School Counselor Association) framework, drawing on evidence from leading international schools. It aligns with established child protection guidance to ensure a comprehensive, proactive, and structured approach to safeguarding all students.
- Where local statutory safeguarding provisions are limited or absent, RVIS will work closely with local non-governmental organisations and child welfare agencies to ensure the protection and well-being of all students.
- This Policy has been developed in collaboration with the School Leadership Team and the Child Protection Team. It will be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness in fulfilling child protection responsibilities, taking into account ongoing cases and how the Policy has been applied in practice.
- RVIS is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all students. The School works closely with relevant agencies to ensure robust systems are in place to identify, assess, and support students who may be at risk, experiencing harm, or in need of additional help.
- RVIS acknowledges that every adult in the school community—including teaching, support, administrative, and security staff, as well as Board members—has a vital role in safeguarding students. The well-being of each student is our top priority, and all staff receive regular safeguarding training to ensure they can fulfil this responsibility effectively.

- All staff are responsible for creating and maintaining a caring, safe, and supportive environment that promotes the social, emotional, physical, and moral development of every student.

Purpose of Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

This policy aims to safeguard the well-being of all students by ensuring thorough recruitment procedures to verify the suitability of staff and volunteers, raising awareness of child protection issues, and equipping

students with the skills and knowledge to remain safe. It establishes clear processes for identifying, reporting, and responding to actual or suspected abuse, provides targeted support for students requiring early intervention or at risk of harm, and promotes a safe, secure, and nurturing learning environment where every student can flourish.

Staff, through their daily interactions with students, are in a pivotal position to identify concerns early. To support this, RVIS fosters a safe and supportive environment where students feel respected, valued, and confident to speak up, knowing their voices will be heard. The school ensures that students are aware of trusted adults they can approach if they have concerns or feel unsafe. Additionally, RVIS provides curriculum-based opportunities through PSHE, Computing, and IT to help students develop the knowledge and skills needed to recognise risks, protect themselves, and seek help when necessary.

At RVIS, student voices are a core part of safeguarding. The school offers various avenues for students to share their views and feedback, such as school and class councils, safety surveys, and involvement in anti-bullying and online safety programs. Furthermore, students' wishes and feelings are documented and thoughtfully considered in all referrals and actions, ensuring their perspectives are valued and guide the provision of appropriate support.

RVIS is committed to supporting each student's development in ways that foster security, confidence, and independence, ensuring that all students feel safe, valued, and able to approach adults when facing difficulties. The school prioritizes raising staff awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities, including the importance of identifying and reporting potential abuse. Systematic monitoring is implemented for students considered at risk,

with staff contributing to assessments and support plans to meet their needs. In addition, RVIS promotes clear and consistent communication among all staff to maintain a coordinated and effective safeguarding approach.

RVIS has implemented clear procedures for all staff to follow when there are concerns about suspected abuse or serious student wellbeing issues. Any disclosure or suspicion must be reported immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will alert the Child Protection Team. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse, the Executive Headmaster will notify the relevant external agencies. The school also works to maintain strong, effective partnerships with local welfare agencies in Bahrain and ensures that all adults who have regular access to students are carefully vetted to confirm their suitability to work unsupervised with children.

Safeguarding Procedures at RVIS

RVIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in line with guidance issued by the Kingdom of Bahrain. The following procedures are in place to ensure robust safeguarding practice.

Governance and Leadership

The Board of Trustees fully understands and fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities. A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is a senior leader, is appointed and receives regular training and ongoing support. In addition, there is a Child Protection Team, including divisional principals, head of pastoral care, school counselors and learning support staff to help with investigating and supporting our students.

Staff Training and Awareness

All staff, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and supply staff, receive regular safeguarding training, with induction sessions provided for all new employees. Induction training covers the RVIS Child Protection Policy, safeguarding procedures, and key guidance such as The National College Child Protection Training. Volunteers may support the school but are only permitted to work directly with children under the supervision of an RVIS teacher, and safeguarding checks are sought wherever possible. All staff are trained to recognise the signs of abuse and to respond appropriately to disclosures. The DSL is always available during school hours, and appropriate cover arrangements are made for out-of-hours or holiday activities.

Communication with Parents

Parents and carers are made aware of the school's safeguarding responsibilities through the RVIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which is included in the introductory school pack and published on the school website.

Safer Recruitment

RVIS follows a strict safer recruitment process for all employees. This includes thorough background check (including police clearances), at least two verified references, a copy of passport or official identification, a medical fitness statement, an up-to-date application form, and an online background check. Staff must provide a police clearance from their country of residence, particularly for staff who have lived abroad for three years or more.

Monitoring and Review

Safeguarding procedures are reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and the Child Protection Team. An annual review of safeguarding policies, procedures, and practice is undertaken to ensure ongoing compliance with legislation and alignment with best practice.

Safeguarding Culture

The names and contact details of the DSL and the wider Safeguarding Team are displayed prominently across the school, including in the staff room. All staff are required to read and sign the Safeguarding Policy on an annual basis. The use of images of children is strictly regulated and permitted only in line with the laws of the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as RVIS Media and ICT Policies.

Staff Induction and Safeguarding Training

All new staff and volunteers at RVIS receive an introduction to the school's safeguarding arrangements. They are informed about the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for their area, including the deputies and their specific responsibilities, ensuring they understand the key points of contact for safeguarding concerns.

- All staff must read:
 - RVIS Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (including appendices)
 - Student Code of Conduct Policies
 - Staff Code of Conduct
- Induction covers:
 - Recognizing signs and symptoms of abuse
 - Managing disclosures from students
 - Recording and reporting concerns
 - Safe working practices
 - Identity and role of the DSL and deputies
- Volunteers, supply staff, and regular visitors are:
 - Informed of the policy location
 - Given names of the DSL and Child Protection Team
 - Provided with procedures for reporting concerns
- All staff receive formal safeguarding training, updated at every two year, covering:
 - Abuse and neglect
 - Specific safeguarding issues
 - Procedures for recording and reporting concerns internally and to relevant authorities
- Staff receive safeguarding updates from the DSL as required, but at least annually.
- Staff with specific safeguarding responsibilities:
 - Undertake enhanced role-specific training, refreshed every two years
 - Maintain ongoing knowledge through regular updates and professional development activities

Roles and Duties in Safeguarding and Child Protection

Head of School

The Head of School is responsible for the operational implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures. Specifically, the Executive Headmaster will:

- Ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are fully implemented and consistently followed by all staff.
- Allocate sufficient funding, time, resources, and professional support to enable the DSL and staff to effectively carry out their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure that all staff feel confident and supported in raising concerns about poor or unsafe practice, and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and in line with the school's whistleblowing procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL holds primary responsibility for safeguarding and child protection at RVIS. Their responsibilities include:

- Coordinating induction training for all new staff and volunteers, and ensuring whole-staff safeguarding training at least every two years, with annual updates provided as necessary.
- Ensuring all staff have read, understood, and signed to confirm their awareness of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Providing systems that enable staff to understand and discharge their safeguarding responsibilities in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Conducting an annual audit of safeguarding procedures, in collaboration with the Executive Headmaster and the safeguarding-designated Board member.

Submitting an annual safeguarding report to the Head of School and Superintendent, including:

- Changes to policy and procedures,
 - Training undertaken by DSL, staff, and faculty members,
 - The number and type of safeguarding incidents/cases,
 - The number of students on the safeguarding register (reported anonymously).
 - Referring cases to the Police in situations of actual or potential serious harm, as appropriate.
 - Keeping the Head of School and divisional principals informed of all child protection concerns, particularly ongoing cases or external enquiries.
 - Liaising with relevant staff (e.g., pastoral leaders, school counselors, school nurse, ICT technicians, and Heads of Year) and external agencies when making safeguarding decisions and referrals.
 - Maintaining accurate written records of child protection concerns, including body maps where appropriate. Staff must only view parts of a child's body that are normally visible.
-
- Ensuring that child protection records are securely stored, separate from the main student file, and kept in locked or password-protected systems.
 - Transferring child protection files safely and promptly when a student changes schools, locally or internationally, and ensuring receipt is confirmed.
 - Monitoring and responding to repeated unauthorized absences, particularly where a child is missing from education.

Developing effective links with relevant agencies and professionals, and cooperating fully with safeguarding enquiries, including serious case reviews.

Child Protection Reporting and Response

Teachers and staff are in a unique position to observe children's behaviour over time and to build close, trusting relationships with students. For this reason, all staff must remain vigilant and act promptly when concerns arise.

When a child makes a disclosure directly to a member of staff, it is essential that the child is listened to carefully. Staff must not promise confidentiality and may only ask open-ended questions such as, "Could you tell me what happened?" or "Please explain what you mean when you say..." Leading questions must be avoided, and staff must not suggest what might have happened or who may have caused harm. Children should not be forced to repeat their disclosure in front of another person, and staff must not begin any investigation themselves, such as asking the child to write down what happened or taking photographs of injuries.

All concerns, discussions, and decisions must be recorded in full using the School's Concern Form. Records should clearly state the date and time of the disclosure, what was said and done, who was present, and must be signed by the reporting staff member. Where allegations involve harmful sexual behaviours, the disclosure should, wherever possible, be managed with two members of staff present, preferably including the DSL. The wishes and feelings of the student will always be taken into account when deciding on next steps and the type of support to provide.

RVIS is committed to supporting children throughout the safeguarding process. This support is provided through vigilance, where staff are alert to signs that something may be troubling a child; understanding and action, where procedures are explained clearly and children's concerns are taken seriously; and stability, where a consistent point of contact is provided to build trust. Children are treated with respect and dignity, recognised as competent individuals, and are fully involved in decisions affecting them. They are informed of the outcomes of assessments and decisions, including reasons when their views cannot be fully met. Staff also provide advocacy, accompanying children to meetings and supporting them in expressing their views.

All staff, including volunteers, must adopt an attitude of "it could happen here." Concerns must always be taken seriously, and staff must act in the best interests of the child. No staff member should assume that another professional will act, and all have a duty to share information that may be critical in keeping children safe.

Concerns must never be dismissed as insignificant. In some cases, a single incident such as a disclosure or injury may warrant immediate referral. More often, concerns may accumulate over time, particularly in cases of neglect or emotional abuse. For this reason, accurate and timely record keeping is essential, as reliance on memory alone could result in a failure to protect.

Staff should also be aware that children may not always feel ready, or may not know how, to disclose abuse. They may fail to recognise their experiences as harmful, or they may feel embarrassed, humiliated, threatened, or held back by vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from maintaining professional curiosity and raising concerns with the DSL. Building trusted relationships with students is vital in creating opportunities for children to speak.

It is not the role of staff to investigate concerns or determine the truth of an allegation. Their duty is to recognise concerns and pass information on in accordance with this Policy. The DSL is the first point of contact for all safeguarding matters. If the DSL is unavailable, staff must contact the School Psychologist, or in their absence, the most senior member of the Senior Leadership Team. All concerns must be reported immediately, and a written record completed as soon as possible using the child's own words wherever possible.

Upon receipt of a concern, the DSL will decide what action to take. All information and decisions, together with the reasons behind them, will be fully documented. Any staff member may make a referral to external agencies. If a child's situation does not appear to improve, staff are expected to raise their concerns again with

the DSL and/or the Head of School and divisional principals until action is taken. Safeguarding concerns must always lead to help for the child.

Finally, if any staff member feels that a concern has not been handled appropriately or in accordance with this Policy, they have a duty to escalate their concerns to the Head of School or the Superintendent.

Attendance and Education Concerns

RVIS recognises that a student missing from education may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, or other safeguarding concerns. To address this, staff are made aware of the procedures during induction and through the Attendance Policy. The school will make every effort to collect more than one emergency contact number for each student to ensure that a responsible adult can be reached if concerns arise when a child is absent.

RVIS is committed to notifying the local authorities when a student is removed from the school roll at both standard and non-standard transition points. In cases where students go missing from education, particularly

on repeat occasions, the school will follow established procedures to identify potential risks, including abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and to help reduce the likelihood of future absences.

Family Safety Concerns

RVIS recognises that exposure to domestic abuse can have serious and lasting effects on children. Abuse may be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional, and children may be directly victimised or impacted by seeing, hearing, or experiencing it within their home environment. Such experiences can harm their health, development, and learning.

Domestic abuse can also occur within students' own intimate relationships, including teenage relationships. These situations may leave young people feeling unsafe, blaming themselves, or even having to leave their home, which can further disrupt their well-being and stability.

To address these risks, RVIS is committed to educating students about healthy relationships and supporting them to recognise unsafe or harmful behaviours. Any concerns relating to domestic abuse will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will provide appropriate support and make referrals to external agencies when necessary.

Protection from Radicalisation and Extremist Influence

RVIS recognises that children may be vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Protecting students from these risks is part of our broader safeguarding responsibilities and is treated with the same importance as protecting them from any other form of harm.

To support this, all staff, volunteers, and governors receive training to understand what radicalisation and extremism are, why vigilance is important, and how to respond if concerns arise. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who has received Prevent training, acts as the main point of contact for any issues related to radicalisation or extremism.

The school also ensures that students are kept safe online by using effective filtering systems, monitoring processes, and clear acceptable-use policies. In addition, our curriculum is designed to promote students' moral, social, and cultural development, helping them to think critically, respect others, and value diversity.

At RVIS, students are encouraged to uphold the values of the Kingdom of Bahrain, including the rule of law, the King's Charter, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also provide staff and parents with resources and information to help them recognise and address any risks of extremism or radicalisation among young people.

Honour-Based Harmful Practices and FGM Awareness

RVIS recognises that staff are in a key position to identify concerns and take appropriate action to protect children from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and other forms of honour-based violence (HBV). Guidance on these issues is provided as part of our safeguarding training.

If staff have concerns that a child may be at risk of HBV, they must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will follow local safeguarding procedures and liaise with relevant authorities, including the Police and child protection services, according to established national and local protocols.

In cases where FGM is suspected or has been carried out on a girl under 18—whether disclosed by the child or observed visually—the school will report the matter directly to the Police. Staff who fail to report such cases

may face disciplinary action. RVIS provides guidance and support to all staff to ensure compliance with this requirement.

Protecting Students from Exploitation

All staff are expected to be vigilant for any signs or information suggesting that a student, their family, or other individuals connected to the school may be victims of modern slavery or human trafficking.

RVIS has a legal and ethical duty to act when there are reasonable grounds to believe someone may be affected. Staff must promptly report any suspicions or information regarding potential cases to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who will ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are followed and relevant authorities are notified.

Peer Harm and Misconduct

RVIS recognizes that children may be vulnerable to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse by their peers or siblings. Such abuse can have a significant and lasting impact and must be treated with the same seriousness as abuse perpetrated by adults.

Child-on-child abuse may take many forms, including bullying (both in-person and online), physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, or hair-pulling, sexual violence, sexual harassment, upskirting, sexting (youth-produced sexual imagery), and initiation or hazing-type rituals. This list is not exhaustive, and all concerns must be taken seriously.

Abuse perpetrated by children can be as harmful as that perpetrated by adults. It is therefore essential to consider both the impact on the victim and the support needs of the child or young person exhibiting harmful behaviour. All incidents will be treated seriously, and safeguarding procedures will be applied consistently whenever a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Staff must never tolerate or dismiss concerns relating to child-on-child abuse, nor regard incidents as “banter,” “just having a laugh,” or a normal part of growing up. Through ongoing training, all staff, volunteers, and

members of the Board of Trustees will develop a clear understanding of the full range of child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment, and will be equipped to recognise and respond appropriately to harmful sexual behaviours.

Certain groups of students may be more at risk of harm, including girls and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Staff should also be aware that incidents may occur outside of the school setting, and that contextual factors may influence behaviour. The DSL and other staff should always consider the wider context in which incidents occur, an approach known as “contextual safeguarding.”

Where abuse involves physical aggression, verbal harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying, incidents will be recorded and any sanctions applied in accordance with the School’s Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies. The use of the term “banter” will not be accepted as a justification for inappropriate behaviour.

Where a child discloses sexual abuse or harassment by another student, the DSL should seek guidance before commencing an investigation or contacting parents, as there may be circumstances where the School is unable to conduct its own investigation.

Support for victims of abuse will be provided in accordance with the School’s Student Code of Conduct Policies. Depending on the nature and severity of the abuse, the School may implement additional protective measures, including risk assessments to safeguard the victim, the alleged perpetrator, and other students or staff. All risk assessments will be documented and regularly reviewed to ensure continued safety.

Racial Harassment and Intolerance

RVIS addresses racist incidents through our Student Code of Conduct, recognising that repeated occurrences or a single serious incident may trigger child protection procedures. All racist incidents are carefully recorded and logged by the school to ensure appropriate follow-up and support.

Online Wellbeing

RVIS Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) are trained to understand the specific risks associated with online safety and maintain the up-to-date knowledge required to protect students while using digital technologies at school. They are equipped to identify and address the additional online risks faced by students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including online bullying, grooming, and radicalisation, and to support SEND students in navigating the digital environment safely.

All staff receive training and regular updates in digital safety, including how to recognise and report concerns. Online safety is treated as a whole-school responsibility, involving staff, students, parents, and governors, and is reinforced through the School's Acceptable Use Policy. The School recognises that students may encounter online risks intentionally or unintentionally, and that some activities may be inappropriate or even illegal.

RVIS is committed to educating students about responsible and safe online behaviour, integrating this instruction into the curriculum, PSHE lessons, and school assemblies. Robust filtering systems and ongoing monitoring of the school network help prevent access to inappropriate or harmful material, while ensuring any incidents are addressed and students receive guidance or support as needed. For remote learning, parents are kept informed about online activities, websites, and interactions, enabling them to support and supervise their children's safe use of technology at home.

Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

To ensure student safety in digital environments, RVIS integrates clear procedures addressing **online safety and digital safeguarding**, aligned with the school's **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**. These procedures aim to protect students from online risks while promoting responsible digital citizenship.

Key Procedures Include:

- **Education and Awareness:**

Students receive age-appropriate guidance on online safety, cyberbullying, privacy, digital ethics, and responsible use of technology.

- **Staff Training:**

All staff are trained annually on digital safeguarding risks, including how to identify, prevent, and respond to online abuse or misconduct.

- **Monitoring and Filtering:**

The school maintains internet filters and monitoring systems to detect and restrict access to harmful or inappropriate content.

- **Student Expectations:**

Students must follow the Acceptable Use Policy, including using devices responsibly, protecting passwords, and avoiding harmful or deceptive online behavior.

- **Reporting Protocols:**

Clear, confidential pathways are in place for reporting online safety concerns (e.g., cyberbullying, online grooming, inappropriate content).

- **Parental Engagement:**

Parents are provided with resources and workshops to support safe and supervised technology use at home.

- **Incident Response:**

Any breaches of digital safety are investigated by designated safeguarding staff and addressed in accordance with school policies and child protection protocols.

These procedures work in tandem with safeguarding and behavior policies to create a safe, supportive digital learning environment for all students at RVIS.

Supporting Children

RVIS recognizes that students who have experienced abuse or witnessed violence may feel helpless, ashamed, or blame themselves, which can impact their self-worth. School may provide the only stable environment for some students. Behaviour may range from withdrawn to aggressive.

To support these students, RVIS will:

- Foster a preventative culture, including education on personal safety and online safety.
- Promote self-esteem and assertiveness through the curriculum and positive relationships.
- Maintain a safe, caring, and positive school environment where students feel valued.
- Apply a consistent Behaviour Policy to support vulnerable students and clarify that abuse is not their fault.
- Work collaboratively with external support services and safeguarding agencies.
- Provide access to trained nurses and school counsellors for ongoing support.
- Ensure confidential transfer of safeguarding information when students move to a new setting.

Supporting Students with Additional Needs

RVIS recognises that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may face additional safeguarding challenges. Staff are trained to understand and address these unique risks. Such challenges can include:

- Assuming that indicators of possible abuse, such as changes in behaviour, mood, or physical injury, are solely related to the student's disability without further investigation.
- Students with SEND being disproportionately affected by bullying or other harmful behaviours, sometimes without showing obvious signs.
- Communication barriers that may make it harder for students to express concerns or seek help.

To address these challenges, RVIS will provide additional pastoral support tailored to the needs of students with SEND, ensuring their safety, well-being, and ability to access help when needed.

Managing Challenging Behaviour Safely

RVIS provides clear guidance on the use of physical intervention within the Staff Code of Conduct, which all staff review annually. Staff understand that when reasonable force is applied, especially with students who have special educational needs, disabilities, or medical conditions, their additional vulnerability must be considered, and every effort should be made to prevent challenging behaviour and minimise the need for physical intervention.

Physical intervention that results in injury or distress may trigger safeguarding or disciplinary procedures. All incidents involving physical intervention are recorded and maintained by the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). While appropriate physical contact may be necessary to support and protect students, all staff are trained in safe working practices and clear professional boundaries. RVIS recognises that a strict 'no contact' approach could prevent staff from effectively safeguarding and supporting students.

Documentation and Record Keeping for Safeguarding

All staff have a responsibility to maintain accurate and timely records relating to child protection and safeguarding concerns. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child, or observing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, must make detailed notes as soon as possible, ideally within one hour. Notes should capture exactly what was said, using the child's own words wherever possible, and must include the date, time, signature, and printed name of the staff member.

Concerns should be logged using the School's designated Child Protection Referral Form or via the electronic safeguarding system. All records of a child protection nature, including case conference minutes, child protection plans, and any other written records of concerns, must be passed to the relevant DSL. Child protection records are stored securely, either under lock and key or in password-protected electronic systems, with access restricted to authorised personnel only.

Any referrals made to external agencies should be copied before sending and retained within the child protection file. The DSL is responsible for maintaining and regularly auditing the School's child protection records. Each standalone file should include a chronology of significant events and ensure that all information and contact details are accurate and up to date.

When a child moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that the child protection records are transferred safely and promptly, with confirmation of receipt obtained. Where necessary, the School may retain copies of child protection records prior to transfer, particularly if they may be required as evidence for statutory purposes, such as court proceedings or serious case reviews. Once these records are no longer required, they will be securely disposed of in accordance with data protection requirements.

Safeguarding Information and Confidentiality

At RVIS, all matters relating to child protection are treated as highly confidential. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will share information about a student with other staff members strictly on a need-to-know basis.

All staff have a professional responsibility to share information with external agencies where necessary to safeguard children. Staff are made aware that they cannot promise a child confidentiality if doing so would compromise the child's safety or wellbeing. Staff are also trained to avoid asking leading questions, as this may affect the reliability of statements made by children.

Personal information will be processed fairly and lawfully in compliance with and exceeding local data protection laws in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Records will be held safely and securely. However, compliance with data protection requirements is never a barrier to sharing information where withholding it could place a child at risk of harm.

When a child about whom safeguarding concerns have been raised leaves the School, the DSL will consider whether it is appropriate to share relevant information with the receiving school in advance. This ensures that appropriate support and safeguarding measures are in place to support the child upon arrival.

Safeguarding Confidentiality Protocols

At Riffa Views International School (RVIS), we uphold the highest standards of confidentiality in all child safeguarding matters. We recognize that confidentiality is essential to maintaining trust, protecting students' dignity, and ensuring ethical and legally compliant responses. However, we also understand that **absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed** when a student's safety or wellbeing is at risk.

Guiding Principles

Our confidentiality protocols are guided by the following principles:

- **The welfare of the child is paramount.**
- **Information is shared on a need-to-know basis only**, and always in the best interest of the child.
- **Students are informed** (when appropriate) that disclosures cannot always remain private, particularly when their safety is at stake.
- **Data protection** and record-keeping practices align with Bahraini law and international best practice in safeguarding.

Who Is Informed and When

Information shared in a safeguarding disclosure is limited to:

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
- The **Head of School** and relevant senior leaders
- **External agencies** (e.g., Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, police, social services) when required
- **School counselors or support staff**, if their involvement is directly necessary

Parents/guardians are typically informed of concerns **unless**:

- The disclosure involves **suspected abuse by a parent/guardian or family member**
- There is a **risk that informing them may escalate the danger** to the student
- The Ministry of Education advises against immediate parental contact

Handling of Records and Information

- All safeguarding records are **confidential, factual, and securely stored** in a restricted digital folder, accessible only to the DSL team.
- Paper records (if used) are locked and stored in a secure cabinet.
- **Emails and electronic communication** related to safeguarding concerns are labeled, archived securely, and treated as formal records.

Student Disclosures

When a student makes a disclosure, staff are expected to:

- **Listen non-judgmentally**, without making promises of confidentiality
- Reassure the student that the information will be shared only with appropriate adults who can help
- Report the concern **immediately to the DSL**, using the school's official reporting process

Students should never be asked to **repeat their experience unnecessarily** to multiple adults, as this can cause further emotional distress.

Information Sharing Protocols with External Agencies

- The DSL manages **all external communications** regarding safeguarding, ensuring alignment with Ministry of Education protocols.
- Only relevant details are shared—**enough to ensure appropriate support or intervention**, but not more than necessary.

- Where possible and appropriate, RVIS works with families to support agency involvement, unless doing so puts the student at greater risk.

Professional Expectations for Staff

All RVIS staff:

- Receive annual training in **child protection, confidentiality, and information sharing**
- Sign and commit to the **RVIS Code of Conduct**, which includes safeguarding responsibilities
- Are expected to **refer—not investigate—any concerns** about a student's safety, and to maintain professional boundaries in all communications

Parental Engagement and Safeguarding

RVIS recognises that maintaining open and effective communication with parents is essential to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students. The School will discuss concerns with parents before involving

external agencies, except in situations where doing so could place the student or others at risk, or compromise a criminal investigation. The school also ensures that parents understand the safeguarding responsibilities of staff and their role in cooperating with relevant agencies to support student safety and well-being.

Staff Support, Supervision, and Safe Practice

RVIS recognises that staff and volunteers who work with students who have experienced harm, or may be at risk of harm, may find these situations stressful or emotionally challenging. The School provides support by enabling staff to discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and access additional resources such as counselling or regular professional supervision, where appropriate.

DSLs receive ongoing supervision through network meetings and direct consultation to maintain up-to-date guidance and best practice. To minimise the risk of allegations and ensure a safe learning environment, all staff and volunteers are trained in safer working practices and are given regular opportunities to develop their understanding of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour when working with children.

Recruitment and Selection for Safeguarding

RVIS is committed to ensuring that all staff, volunteers, and contractors working with our students are appropriately vetted and recruited in a manner that safeguards children.

The recruitment process is designed to establish a candidate's commitment to safeguarding children and to identify, deter, or reject individuals who may pose a risk of harm or are otherwise unsuitable to work with children. References are requested and scrutinised for all candidates, including volunteers and internal applicants. Any discrepancies or concerns arising from references are addressed during interviews. References are always requested directly from the referee and verified as coming from a senior person with appropriate authority. Electronic references are also validated to ensure they originate from legitimate sources. Where references are incomplete or unsatisfactory, the School will contact referees directly for clarification, and candidates may be asked to provide alternative referees if necessary.

All staff with substantial access to children undergo rigorous suitability checks, including verification of identity and qualifications. Teachers are additionally screened to ensure there are no prohibitions, sanctions, or restrictions preventing them from working in specific roles. Supply staff, contractors, alternative providers, initial teacher training providers, and third-party agencies are required to provide written assurance that all appropriate checks have been completed for their staff who work with, or have regular contact with, RVIS students.

Staff Conduct and Allegations Against Staff

All staff at RVIS are expected to maintain professional conduct and take care not to place themselves in situations that could be perceived as compromising or vulnerable when working with children. Staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students—or themselves—at risk of harm or of allegations of harm. It is recommended that meetings, interviews, or work with individual children or parents take place in view of other adults whenever possible.

Certain situations require closer interaction with students, including sports coaching, email or telephone communication, and school trips. In these contexts, staff must demonstrate the highest standards of professional conduct. All communication should remain formal and appropriate, including interactions on social networking sites.

If a student makes an allegation against a member of staff, the safety and wellbeing of the child will remain the School's paramount concern. All allegations will be treated in strict confidence. In cases where the allegation concerns the Head of a school, the matter must be reported immediately to the school Superintendent, without notifying the Head against whom the allegation has been made.

Upon receipt of an allegation, the School will immediately consider the nature, content, and context of the claim and agree on a course of action, including potential involvement of the Police. All discussions and decisions will be recorded in writing. Communication with both the individual involved and the parents of the child(ren) will be carefully managed and agreed upon.

RVIS will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity. The School is aware of its legal obligations to protect the identity of the member of staff during the investigation, particularly in cases where allegations may ultimately be found to be unfounded or malicious.

Safeguarding Through Responsible Relationships

RVIS recognises that all adults working within the School hold a position of trust in relation to the students in their care. Any misuse of this trust, including behaviour that exploits or harms a student, may constitute a criminal offence.

The School acknowledges that the principles of equality, as outlined in relevant legislation, apply regardless of sexual orientation. This legislation is specifically designed to protect students over the age of consent but under 18, ensuring they are safeguarded while in an educational setting.

All staff are expected to maintain professional boundaries, act with integrity, and uphold the highest standards of conduct to protect the well-being of all students.

Handling Safeguarding Concerns and Complaints

RVIS recognises that listening to children, parents, staff, and volunteers is a vital part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students. Any concern or expression of dissatisfaction regarding a child's safety or well-being will be taken seriously, thoroughly investigated, and acted upon to ensure the child's protection.

The School ensures that the individual raising the concern—whether a student, parent, staff member, or volunteer—is informed of the actions that will be taken and provided with an estimated timeframe for resolution. Regular updates will also be given to keep them informed of the progress.

RVIS maintains a clear Complaints Policy, which is readily accessible to all members of the school community, to support transparency and confidence in the handling of safeguarding concerns.

Raising Concerns and Whistle-blowing Procedures

RVIS is committed to maintaining a safe and transparent environment in which all safeguarding concerns are raised and addressed appropriately. The School has a Whistle-blowing Policy, which all staff are expected to be familiar with, to guide the reporting of unsafe practices, misconduct, or potential failures in safeguarding procedures.

Staff have a professional responsibility to report any behaviour or conduct of colleagues that could potentially place students at risk. Where necessary, staff may escalate concerns to external agencies. Within RVIS, such concerns should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Divisional Principals, or the Head of School.

If a concern involves the Head of School, staff must report it immediately and directly to the School Superintendent. All reports will be handled confidentially, and staff raising concerns in good faith will be offered appropriate protection.

Photography, Video, and Image Use

The welfare and protection of children is the School's primary concern. Consideration must always be given to whether the use of photography or video could place a child at risk, including the potential for misuse, such as grooming or inappropriate online sharing, particularly on social media.

Consent from parents or guardians must be obtained before any child is photographed or videoed. Only school-owned devices may be used to capture images of students. Staff are not permitted to use personal mobile devices or cameras for taking photographs or videos of children in school, except with prior approval from the Executive Headmaster. Any breach of this requirement may result in disciplinary action.

Photographs and videos should only be taken for legitimate educational purposes or for publication on the School's official social media channels. Staff wishing to use personal devices for any other reason must obtain explicit permission in advance.

Mobile phones are not permitted outside of designated areas, including the office and staff room. Parents and visitors are not permitted to use mobile phones or cameras in or around the Early Years setting without prior approval from the Principal or Head of School. Special consideration must be given when photographing vulnerable children to ensure their safety and privacy.

Many students have access to hand-held devices, and parents are encouraged to implement measures to safeguard their children when using the internet and social media at home or in the community.

Maintaining Safe and Professional Relationships

All staff are expected to maintain professional and appropriate relationships with students at all times. Further guidance is provided in the RVIS Staff Code of Conduct, which should be read alongside this Safeguarding Policy.

The School provides clear advice regarding staff personal online activity and enforces strict rules around electronic communication and online contact with students. Any staff member found to be in breach of these

rules may face disciplinary action and/or a child protection investigation to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Student Safety and Risk Management

RVIS is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment that protects the wellbeing of all students, both on the school site and during off-site activities such as trips and visits. Comprehensive risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed to address potential hazards, including site security, the risk of students being exposed to extremist behavior or drawn into terrorism, and the potential risks posed by or to students exhibiting harmful behavior. All staff are expected to adhere to the Health, Safety, and Safeguarding guidelines to ensure a safe learning environment for every child.

Maintaining a Secure and Safe School Environment

RVIS is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The School undertakes appropriate risk assessments and inspections of all equipment, buildings, and grounds in accordance with local and national health and safety guidance and regulations.

Adequate security measures are in place to manage the use of the School's premises by visitors, both during and outside of school hours, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff.

All visitors to the School, including visiting speakers, theatre groups, or curriculum specialists, are subject to appropriate checks and vetting procedures. These checks ensure that visitors are not associated with extremist groups or involved in promoting extremist, harmful, or inappropriate material.

Professional Obligations and Duty to Safeguard

All staff at RVIS, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and permanent employees, as well as volunteers, are required to adhere to the School's Code of Conduct Policy. A copy of the Code of Conduct is readily available

to all staff and provides clear guidance on professional expectations, including the responsibility to inform the School of any reasons that may disqualify them from working with children.

Staff must remain vigilant in considering safeguarding arrangements when working with children in close one-to-one settings, particularly during activities such as performing arts, sports coaching, or other scenarios requiring individual supervision.

Where specific guidance is required regarding safeguarding arrangements or concerns, staff are encouraged to consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead on a case-by-case basis. Staff have a professional duty to report any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing in accordance with this Policy.

Escalation of Safeguarding Concerns

RVIS recognises that professional disagreements may occasionally arise between agencies involved in safeguarding children. Resolving such disagreements is an essential part of effective cooperation and joint working to protect and promote the welfare of children.

As part of our safeguarding responsibilities, RVIS staff and partners must be prepared to challenge decisions or actions if there is a concern that responses to safeguarding issues, assessments, or the implementation of plans are not adequately protecting a child or promoting their welfare.

RVIS is aware of, and committed to following, established escalation procedures for raising concerns regarding poor practice or insufficient safeguarding measures. Staff are expected to utilise these procedures as necessary to ensure that the best interests of children are upheld at all times.

Safeguarding Monitoring and Review

RVIS is committed to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures to ensure their effectiveness in protecting and promoting the welfare of students.

The monitoring and evaluation process includes:

- The presentation of an annual safeguarding report to the Head of School and Superintendent, detailing the operation and effectiveness of safeguarding practices across the School.
- Regular meetings with the DSL at each School to review safeguarding concerns, discuss cases, and evaluate procedures.
- Collaboration and sharing of best practice between DSL and Child Protection Team across all grade levels to maintain consistency and continuous improvement.
- Scrutiny and analysis of data and risk assessments to identify trends, gaps, or areas for improvement.
- Regular review of the School's recruitment background checks to ensure compliance with safer recruitment standards.
- Monitoring of logs of bullying, racist, and behavioural incidents, as well as records of actions taken.
- Supervision of staff involved in child protection, including regular updates to the Head of School and Superintendent and the submission of annual reports to the Board.

This structured approach ensures that safeguarding policies and procedures remain effective, responsive, and aligned with both legal requirements and best practice standards.

External Speakers and Visitor Safeguarding

RVIS maintains clear protocols to ensure that any visiting speakers are suitable and appropriately supervised. The School's responsibility is to ensure that students can critically evaluate the information they receive and that the content aligns with the ethos, values, and safeguarding standards of RVIS.

Prior to approving a visiting speaker, the School will conduct a risk assessment to evaluate suitability and any necessary vetting requirements. This may include relevant background checks, depending on the nature of the session.

Visiting speakers are expected to promote, where appropriate, the Bahraini values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. Their sessions must not undermine these values at any time.

In certain cases, the School may request copies of the speaker's presentation materials and/or recordings in advance to ensure alignment with the School's safeguarding and educational standards.

While on School premises, visiting speakers must be supervised by a member of staff at all times. Additionally, all visiting speakers are required to present original, current photographic identification, such as a passport or photo-card driving licence, upon arrival.

Safeguarding During External Events

When participating in events organised by other schools or external organisations, such as sports competitions or music performances, RVIS will ensure that appropriate image guidelines are considered and applied. For larger events, it is expected that specific guidelines regarding photography and videography, including press images, will be established.

Arrangements should include clear communication of these guidelines to all participants and attendees, for example through letters prior to the event, announcements during the event, or printed programmes.

While the School will make reasonable efforts to safeguard the digital images of students, parents and carers should be aware that at some events it may not be possible to strictly enforce image restrictions. RVIS cannot be held accountable for images taken by parents, guardians, or members of the public.

Adequate supervision by School staff is required to ensure the safety and welfare of all children, particularly when there is contact with the public. Staff should remain vigilant in areas such as bathrooms and changing rooms, and these considerations should be incorporated into the event's risk assessment.

Conclusion

RVIS is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for all children. Safeguarding and child protection are the responsibility of every member of the School community, including staff, volunteers, trustees, parents, and students themselves.

This policy establishes clear procedures, roles, and responsibilities to ensure that children are protected from harm, abuse, and neglect. RVIS takes seriously its duty to identify and respond to concerns promptly, to work collaboratively with relevant agencies, and to support children and families in line with best practice and statutory guidance.

The School recognises that safeguarding is a dynamic and ongoing process. Policies, procedures, and practices will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, and the needs of the children in our care.

Ultimately, the welfare and safety of children are paramount. By adhering to this policy, RVIS seeks to foster a culture of vigilance, responsibility, and shared commitment to safeguarding, ensuring that every child can thrive in a secure and positive learning environment. **Additional Information & Resources:**

Child Protection Referral Form:

A **Child Protection Referral (CPR) Form** is a formal document used by school staff or designated personnel to report concerns or suspicions of abuse, neglect, or harm involving a student. It provides a clear, structured way to record relevant information and initiate the safeguarding process.

The **Child Protection Referral (CPR) Form** should be used immediately when any of the following occur:

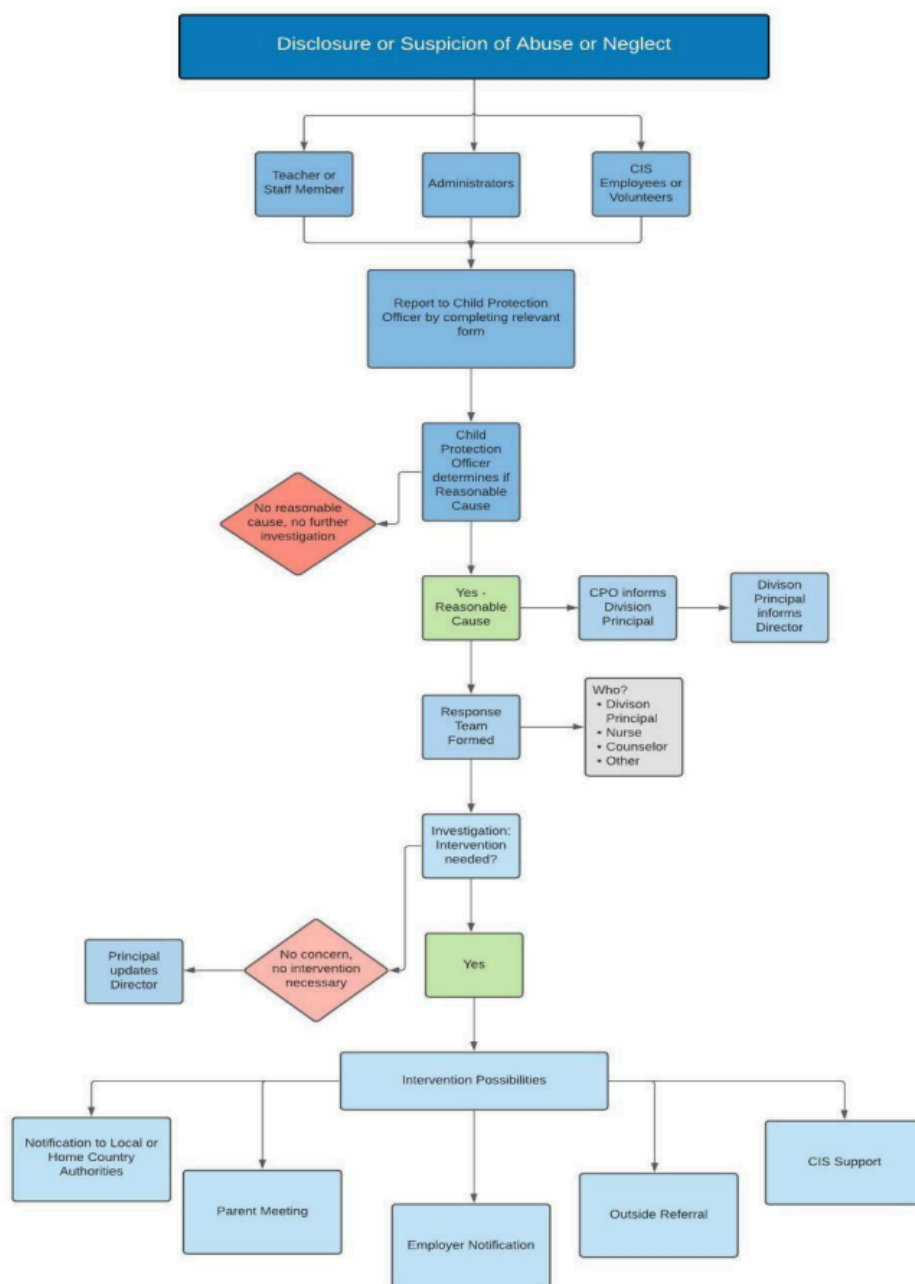
- A student discloses abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, or neglect)
- A staff member witnesses or suspects harm or inappropriate behavior toward a student
- There are visible signs of physical injury or behavioral changes that raise concern

- There is a concern about a student's safety at home or school
- A third party (peer, parent, community member) reports potential abuse or risk
- Online behavior suggests a risk of exploitation, bullying, or harm

It **should not** be ***delayed*** or ***investigated independently*** by staff before reporting. The role of the person completing the form is to ***record and report***, not determine the truth.

<p><u>Child Protection Referral (CPR)</u></p> <p>A Child Protection Referral should be made when there are concerns a child is at <i>risk of harm, abuse, or neglect</i>.</p> <p>This includes <i>disclosures, visible signs, or significant behavioral changes</i>.</p> <p>Always <u>report promptly</u> to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, using the appropriate Google Form.</p>	<p>1) Receive and Record</p> <p>Listen carefully, stay calm, and reassure the student (if disclosure is direct).</p> <p>Record the disclosure or concern factually, using the child's own words where possible, using the CPR form.</p> <p>Include date, time, people involved, and any visible signs or injuries.</p>	<p>2) Report Immediately</p> <p>CPR form will immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other appropriate school staff.</p> <p>Do not investigate independently or promise confidentiality to the student.</p>
<p>3) Maintain Confidentiality</p> <p>Share information strictly on a need-to-know basis.</p> <p>Protect the identity of the student</p>	<p>4) Initial Assessment by DSL</p> <p>DSL reviews the concern to assess risk level.</p> <p>Gather relevant background</p>	<p><u>5) Investigation Initiated</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge and review the CPR • Assess immediate risk • Review all evidence

and those involved.	<p>information from staff and records, if needed.</p> <p>Consider the student's safety and well-being as the top priority.</p> <p><i>*If the information within the CPR does fulfill the criteria, it will be considered as an Inclusive Education Referral (IER - see below)</i></p>	<p>gathered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with student for any additional evidence Consult with safeguarding team and/or senior leadership Inform and support the student Notify parents (if appropriate)
<p>6) Contact External Agencies (if required)</p> <p>If the concern meets the threshold, refer to social services, child protection services, the Ministry of Education, or local Police (as required by local laws).</p> <p>Follow national child protection guidelines and reporting timelines.</p>	<p>7) Document All Actions</p> <p>Keep detailed, dated records of all steps taken, decisions made, and communications.</p> <p>Store records securely according to school and legal requirements.</p>	<p>8) Follow-Up and Support</p> <p>Ensure ongoing support for the student and others affected.</p> <p>Monitor the situation and collaborate with external agencies where appropriate.</p> <p>Debrief staff if needed, respecting confidentiality.</p>



You can also refer to the **RVIS - Child Protection / Inclusive Education Referral Form Matrix** to help you make an informed decision about which referral form you should complete. This document will be attached to the introduction in the **RVIS Child Protection Referral**.

Post-Incident Support Procedures at RVIS:

At RVIS, we are committed to ensuring that students receive the care and support they need following any safeguarding, behavioral, or well-being incident. Our post-incident response prioritizes the emotional and psychological safety of students through trauma-informed practices and access to appropriate counseling resources.

- **Immediate Safety and Emotional Regulation**

Ensure the student is physically and emotionally safe. A trusted staff member provides a calm, reassuring presence while initial support is offered.

- **Trauma-Informed Approach**

Staff respond with empathy, patience, and awareness of trauma impacts. Language is non-judgmental, and students are given choice and control wherever possible.

- **Access to Counseling Services**

Students are referred to the RVIS School Counselor for ongoing emotional support. Individual or group counseling is offered depending on the nature of the incident.

- **Follow-Up and Monitoring**

Designated staff (e.g., counselor, DSL, or Pastoral Lead) maintain regular check-ins to assess the student's well-being and adjust support as needed.

- **Collaboration with Parents/Guardians**

Families are engaged (where appropriate) in a supportive and confidential manner to reinforce recovery efforts at home and ensure continuity of care.

-

- **Referral to External Support**

If additional or specialized support is required, the school may coordinate with external mental health professionals, educational psychologists, or community agencies.

- **Restorative Practices**

When appropriate, restorative approaches are used to rebuild trust, support reconciliation, and promote personal growth and accountability.

These protocols reflect our holistic and student-centered approach to well-being, ensuring that all students feel safe, supported, and empowered to recover and thrive.

Whistleblowing Mechanism at RVIS

RVIS is committed to fostering an open, transparent, and safe environment where all staff members, students, parents, and community stakeholders feel empowered to raise concerns about unethical, unsafe, or inappropriate practices without fear of retaliation.

Purpose

To provide a clear, confidential, and accessible process for reporting concerns related to safeguarding, misconduct, unethical behavior, or policy violations, ensuring timely and effective responses.

Key Features:

- **Safe and Confidential Reporting**

Individuals can report concerns anonymously or openly, with full assurance that their identity and the information provided will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

- **Multiple Reporting Channels**

Concerns can be raised via designated points of contact, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Head of Pastoral Care, School Leadership Team, or an external independent whistleblowing service if preferred.

- **Protection Against Retaliation**

RVIS strictly prohibits any form of retaliation, victimization, or discrimination against those who raise genuine concerns in good faith.

- **Clear Procedures**

Reports are documented, acknowledged promptly, and investigated thoroughly following established protocols. Outcomes and follow-up actions are communicated appropriately, respecting confidentiality.

- **Training and Awareness**

Regular training ensures that all staff understand their rights and responsibilities regarding whistleblowing and know how to access the reporting mechanisms.

How to Raise a Concern

1. Speak directly with the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** or Head of Pastoral Care.
2. Report concerns confidentially via Toodle
3. If uncomfortable, contact a member of the School Leadership Team or use the external whistleblowing service.

By encouraging open communication and providing robust protections, RVIS ensures that concerns are addressed effectively, maintaining the highest standards of safety, ethics, and integrity across our school community.

RVIS Elementary School Student Code of Conduct

RVIS Middle School & High School Student Code of Conduct

Understanding and Intervening in Bullying Behaviour

Bullying often occurs as a group phenomenon, with approximately 85% of incidents happening in the presence of others. By equipping students with the skills and confidence to intervene—either during the incident or afterward—schools can make significant progress in reducing bullying.

The Role of Adults in Intervening

- Remain calm and prioritize the safety of everyone involved.
- Listen carefully to all perspectives before making any judgments.
- Assess whether the situation meets the criteria for bullying.
- Provide appropriate support to the individual affected, the person exhibiting bullying behavior, and any bystanders.
- Consider the age, maturity, and individual circumstances of all parties involved.
- Ensure that those engaging in bullying have an opportunity to understand the impact of their actions.

The Role of Students in Intervening

- Demonstrate positive behaviours that you want others to follow.
- Support the individual targeted by bullying.
- Avoid watching or encouraging bullying, as this can imply acceptance of the behaviour.
- If it is safe, invite the targeted person to leave the situation with you (e.g., “Hey, let’s go.”).
- Follow up to check on the well-being of the person affected and confirm they have someone to talk to.
- Encourage the targeted individual to report the incident to a trusted adult, or do so on their behalf if necessary.

Steps Following Disclosure or Suspicion of Abuse or Neglect

Disclosure or Suspicion:

When an RVIS employee suspects that a child may have been abused or neglected, they are required to report their concerns to a designated Child Protection Officer. The Child Protection Officer, in collaboration with the child protection team, will assess whether there is reasonable cause to suspect abuse or neglect.

If reasonable cause is established, the divisional principal will notify the school director, and a response team—including a counselor, nurse, and other relevant personnel—will be convened to determine whether a formal investigation is warranted.

Investigation Process

If an investigation is deemed necessary, information may be collected from a variety of sources, including:

- School personnel familiar with the child's background and history
- Relevant school records
- Individuals who may have witnessed the incident or were nearby
- The child involved

The investigation will focus on gathering objective, factual information and will be conducted with the utmost respect for the privacy and dignity of the child, their family, and any others involved. Depending on the situation, the child's experience may be assessed through observation, interviews, play-based assessments, or drawings.

Following the investigation, the response team will develop an appropriate plan of action, with regular updates provided to the school director.

Intervention

If the investigation reveals that a third party (i.e., someone outside the family) may be responsible for the suspected abuse or neglect, the child's parents will be contacted immediately.

If a parent or family member is identified as a possible source of abuse or neglect, the school may consider the following actions:

- Conducting a parent meeting to formally present the concerns
- Referring the family to external counseling or support services
- Notifying the parent's diplomatic mission or international employer, if applicable

Depending on the nature of the abuse, the professional judgment of the response team, and the family's response to initial interventions, additional steps may be taken with the approval of the Head of School. These may include:

- Contacting the parent's employer
- Reporting the matter to local child protection authorities
- Notifying relevant child welfare agencies in the family's home country
- Informing any future or prospective schools the child may attend

Ongoing Support for the Child

Throughout the process, the school counselor at RVIS will provide continued support to the child. The counselor may:

- Maintain regular contact with the child and their family to offer emotional support and guidance
- Support teachers and administrators in addressing the child's needs within the school environment
- Share relevant resources and strategies with teachers to help support the child's well-being and learning
- Communicate and collaborate with any external counselors or professionals involved in the child's care

All documentation related to suspected or confirmed cases of abuse or neglect—including dates, reported incidents, individuals involved, and safety plans—will be securely stored in a confidential file, accessible only to authorized personnel.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

At RVIS, we are proud to provide our students and staff with access to a wide range of digital tools and resources, including the internet, educational platforms, and various online services. We recognize the

essential role technology plays in today's learning environment and are committed to creating a safe, secure, and supportive digital experience for all users.

Our goal is to integrate technology meaningfully into the educational experience—ensuring it is *a part of us, not apart from us*. We believe the educational benefits of technology and the school's information technology network significantly outweigh the potential risks when used responsibly.

RVIS is dedicated to leveraging both existing and emerging technologies to foster 21st-century learning and prepare students for success in an increasingly digital and globally connected world. We also recognize the importance of teaching students how to use these tools effectively, responsibly, and ethically.

As part of our commitment to student development, RVIS supports the growth of responsible digital citizens and implements safeguards to promote student well-being. The RVIS Technology Acceptable Use Policy works in alignment with our Child Protection Policy to ensure that all technology use within the school environment upholds our standards for safety, respect, and ethical conduct.

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Annual Child Protection Policy Review at RVIS

At Riffa Views International School (RVIS), the **Child Protection Policy** undergoes a **formal annual review** to ensure it remains:

- Aligned with **Bahrain Ministry of Education regulations**
- Compliant with **IB standards and practices**
- Responsive to the **evolving needs of our school community**

Key Elements of the Review Process:

- **Stakeholder Involvement**

Feedback is gathered from staff, parents, and students to ensure the policy reflects a broad range of perspectives and remains practical, effective, and community-informed.

- **Legal and Regulatory Compliance**

The policy is reviewed in light of updates to national laws, Ministry directives, and international safeguarding guidance.

- **IB Standards Alignment**

The review ensures consistency with the IB's expectations around student safety, well-being, and ethical leadership.

- **Safeguarding Team Oversight**

The review is led by the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, in collaboration with school leadership and relevant safeguarding personnel.

- **Transparent Updates**

Policy changes are clearly communicated to all stakeholders, with updated versions shared through official school platforms.

References:

- [UN Conventions on the Right of the child](#)
- [CoIS Standards](#)
- [IBO Standards](#)
- [ChildSafeguarding.com](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)
- [Child Protection Referral Form](#)
- [Government of Bahrain: Child Rights](#)
- [Council of Representatives \(Kingdom of Bahrain\) - Child Protection](#)
- [Ministry of Social Development \(Kingdom of Bahrain\) - Childhood Development & Protective Services](#)