



FIRST BRIDGE SCHOOL

Early years (safeguarding and welfare) policy

Introduction

At First Bridge School, pupil welfare and safety are our highest priority. We provide a safe, secure and supportive environment for education and therapy. The aim of this policy is to outline First Bridge School's EYFS safeguarding and welfare approach and how we meet the needs of our pupils

We promote a safeguarding culture in which staff, parents and visitors understand their duty of care. We aim to:

- provide a safe environment.
- help pupils build confidence
- help pupils build independence and positive relationships.
- support pupils to assert boundaries and make safe choices.
- ensure staff are trained and supported; and work in partnership with parents to promote pupil welfare.

In line with the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, our safeguarding arrangements set out the action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a pupil, the action to be taken in the event of an allegation against a member of staff, how mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used, the procedures followed to check the suitability of new recruits, and how safeguarding training is delivered and how staff are supported to put this into practice.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing helps ensure poor or unsafe practice is identified and addressed promptly.

Staff should raise concerns with their line manager in the first instance. If unresolved, escalate to the headteacher. Staff may also seek external advice (e.g., NSPCC whistleblowing helpline). Any concern about a pupil's immediate safety or welfare must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who will inform the local authority children's social care team, or the police. For more detail on Whistleblowing procedures, please refer to our school whistleblowing policy.

Pupil absence

Attendance is monitored closely. The school day runs 09:00–16:00 (09:00–12:00 and 13:00–16:00). For any unexplained absence, the clinical supervisor or school administrator will message via Family and follow up by phone to confirm the reason. We consider patterns, trends and individual circumstances (including vulnerability) when reviewing repeated or prolonged absence. Safeguarding concerns are referred to children’s social care or the police as appropriate. Further detail can be found in the school attendance policy (including planned absences, notification and authorisation, and Attendance Support Plans).

Use of mobile and tablet devices

- All devices, including laptops and computers, are stored securely when not in use, within classrooms.
- Staff check any applications/content which the pupils will view, before sharing it with pupils.
- The DNS filtering and monitoring system ensures that any inappropriate content is blocked and activity is monitored. DNS operates on both the schools wifi system and is installed on all school devices. Alerts go directly to the headteacher, who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). However, in the unlikely event that any staff member should discover any potentially unsafe or inappropriate material, they must immediately remove the content from the pupil’s view. All such incidents must be reported to the DSL.
- No school devices are ever used for personal use by staff.
- Staff use the school’s digital cameras and tablets (only; personal devices are never used) to record pupils’ learning and achievements. Tablets are password-protected with a pin and stored securely overnight. Photographs and videos are deleted securely once uploaded to the relevant application and/or are no longer required.
- Standard tablets may be used only in open bathroom areas (e.g., handwashing areas) to support toileting independence.
- Pupils who use tablets for communication may keep their devices inside toilet cubicles.

- Communication devices are held by the pupil or stored in the therapist's tote bag — never held by staff.
- If reinforcement is needed inside cubicles, staff use an alternative device with the camera permanently disabled/off. These devices are used only to deliver visual, auditory, or interactive reinforcers during toilet learning.
- Photographs are never taken of pupils in nappies, when asleep or when inappropriately dressed.
- Any photographs or videos taken by staff, other adults (including parents), and the pupils themselves during ANY school activity (including outings and events) are not put on public display or published anywhere on the internet or social media, unless specific consent is received from the adults and parents of the pupils involved.

For more information on how we use mobile, tablet and digital devices and AI, can be found in our school online safety, mobile devices and AI policy.

Staffing and recruitment

Suitable staffing

We follow safer recruitment to ensure suitable staff are appointed. Candidates take part in interviews and observed play sessions. Enhanced DBS checks are completed for staff working directly with pupils and for others working on the premises as required. Where a person has lived or worked abroad, we obtain appropriate additional criminal records checks (and checks from more than one country where relevant). Qualifications, DBS details and references are obtained, verified and recorded securely before employment. We obtain references in line with EYFS expectations: we do not accept open references (e.g. "to whom it may concern"), do not rely on applicants to obtain references, and seek references from a current/recent employer, training provider or education setting completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (not a family member). We verify electronic references, follow up any vague or inconsistent information with referees and the applicant, and resolve any concerns (including reasons for leaving) before confirming an appointment. Where required, we make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a member of staff is dismissed (or would have been dismissed had they not left first) because

they have harmed a child or put a child at risk of harm. For more information on how we approach safer recruiting and staff suitability, please refer to our safeguarding policy.

Disqualification

We ensure staff are suitable to work with pupils and are not disqualified from working in early years provision under the Childcare Act 2006. A disqualified person must not be employed in connection with early years provision or be involved in its management. If we become aware of information that may lead to disqualification, we take immediate action to safeguard pupils and report significant events in line with statutory requirements and guidance.

Staff must be fit to work with pupils and must not be under the influence of alcohol or substances that could impair their judgement or care. Where medication may affect a person's ability to work safely, medical advice must be sought, and the staff member may only work directly with pupils if confirmed as not impaired. Fit-for-work checks are completed during term time. Medication is stored securely and out of pupils' reach. Smoking is not permitted when pupils are present or due to be present; staff must not vape/use e-cigarettes around pupils. We comply with the Equality Act 2010 and do not discriminate on protected grounds.

English language skills

We ensure all staff have sufficient spoken and written English to support pupil safety and wellbeing. Staff must communicate effectively with pupils, colleagues, parents and external professionals; understand health, safety and care instructions; maintain records in English; liaise with external agencies (e.g., OT, SaLT, Educational Psychologist, Ofsted); and contact emergency services when required.

Safeguarding training

All staff are trained to understand and follow safeguarding policies and procedures. Details of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Designated Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) responsibilities and training content and frequency are set out in the school's safeguarding policy.

Supervision of staff and training

Staff training

Ensuring that staff at First Bridge School are effectively trained and confident in safeguarding policies and procedures is of paramount importance. To ensure that staff can recognise and act appropriately when safeguarding concerns arrive, the following training systems are in place:

For the immediate and wider designated safeguarding team (DSL and DDSLs)

- The DSL completes an advanced level of training for designated safeguarding leads with the local authority, annually.
- DDSLs who have not attended in-person training will complete a suitable level of online training at least every other year.
- Additional training, as required by KCSIE updates will also take place.

For staff

- Before working with pupils, staff complete safeguarding training via Flick Learning. This training includes but is not limited to: Child Protection and Safeguarding, Prevent Training, FGM, GDPR and Data Protection.
- Regular refresher training, in line with KCSIE updates and legislation/focus areas and/or other safeguarding issues and case studies, is facilitated by the DSL.

Embedded safeguarding procedures

Staff at First Bridge receive regular supervision in their roles, as well as performance appraisals in line with our Performance Appraisal Policy. This appraisal discusses Safeguarding as well as clinical aspects.

We use our daily briefing and de-briefing as a forum for staff to keep up to date on safeguarding policies and procedures.

Early years staff at First Bridge School receive weekly and monthly supervisions (clinical and welfare/practice check ins) as well as classroom-

based training and annual performance appraisals. Supervision supports discussion of pupils' development and wellbeing, safeguarding concerns, problem-solving and coaching.

All staff receive induction training and support to carry out their roles safely and effectively. Induction includes safeguarding/child protection, health and safety and emergency evacuation; new staff complete two weeks of shadowing before working independently.

Continuous professional development is provided through weekly training and development sessions to promote reflective practice and continuous improvement.

Paediatric First Aid

At least one staff member with a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate is on the premises whenever pupils are present and accompanies pupils on outings. Training meets statutory requirements and is renewed every three years. Staff who join us with Level 2/3 early years qualifications must obtain their PFA within three months of joining, to count in ratios. PFA records are maintained and are available to parents on request. See the First Aid and Medication Policy for detail on first aider numbers and cover.

Staff ratios and Key person

Staff: Child Ratios

We organise staffing so pupils are appropriately cared for, supported and supervised throughout the day, including at mealtimes, and remain within sight or hearing of staff.

Staff-to-child ratios and qualifications meet EYFS statutory framework requirements for pupils aged three and over in independent schools. Staff included in ratios hold appropriate early years qualifications and required English qualifications (where applicable). Further information is in our safeguarding policy.

Key person

The clinical supervisor is the designated key person for each pupil, as they complete ongoing assessments, set goals, provide staff training/supervision and maintain at least monthly contact with families.

First Aid

We have a fully equipped and legislatively compliant medical room for both pupils and staff. A suitable first aid box is accessible in every classroom, including the medical room and a registered first aider is always available. All accidents, injuries and first aid treatment are recorded on Family and shared with parents for acknowledgement. Parents/carers are informed the same day (or as soon as reasonably practicable); head injuries also trigger a phone call.

If a pupil becomes unwell or is suspected to be infectious, we take appropriate action promptly: we follow individual health care plans and first aid guidance, contact parents/carers to agree next steps (including collection where needed), and seek medical advice or emergency help where required. We apply exclusion periods and infection control guidance as appropriate and take steps to prevent the spread of infection, including increased cleaning/disinfection of equipment and surfaces, safe disposal of waste, ventilation, and reinforcing handwashing and hygiene routines. Where there are concerns about a significant outbreak or reportable infection, we seek public health advice and, where required, notify relevant agencies.

Medication

We promote pupils' health and wellbeing, including oral health, through daily routines and learning. We have procedures for storing, administering and recording medication, including systems to obtain and keep up to date information about a pupil's medical needs. Medicine (prescription and non-prescription) is only administered where written permission has been obtained from the parent/carer for that particular medicine. Each time medicine is administered, staff make a written record, and parents/carers are informed on the same day (or as soon as reasonably practicable). Staff receive appropriate training where administration requires medical or technical knowledge. Prescription medicines are only administered where they have been prescribed for a pupil by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist (medicines containing aspirin are only given if prescribed by a doctor). Further detail is set out in the school's first aid and medication policy.

Safer eating

Safe procedures are followed at mealtimes. Pupils are supervised at all times while eating and remain within sight and hearing of staff; at least one PFA-

qualified staff member is present. Before admission we collect and record dietary requirements, allergies, intolerances and health needs, share them with relevant staff and display key information in classrooms and the kitchen. Allergy management plans are agreed with parents and, where appropriate, health professionals, and staff are trained to recognise symptoms and follow emergency procedures. Food is prepared safely and in a form appropriate to each pupil's developmental stage to reduce choking risk. Choking incidents requiring intervention are recorded and shared with parents. Staff who prepare/handle food receive food hygiene training and appropriate facilities are maintained. Please also see the school's health and safety policy, and pupils' individual eating needs/choking risks sections within their behaviour support plans.

Behaviour

We support pupils' behaviour positively. Ongoing behaviour data informs individual behaviour plans. We use bespoke strategies to reduce challenging behaviour and teach alternative skills. See the behaviour policy.

We do not use or threaten corporal punishment or any punishment that may harm a pupil's wellbeing. Physical intervention is a last resort and used only where there is an immediate risk of harm. Therapists complete Team Teach training after probation; practice is overseen by two Team Teach trainers. Any physical intervention is recorded and reviewed, parents are informed the same day (or as soon as reasonably practicable), and behaviour plans are updated where needed. For more information, please refer to our school physical intervention policy.

Site safety

Safety of the premises

The premises are maintained to be safe, suitable and fit for purpose for pupils and activities. We comply with relevant health and safety, fire safety and hygiene requirements. Emergency procedures are in place, including a designated safe space, and fire detection and safety equipment is maintained. Fire exits are clearly marked, unobstructed and easy to open from the inside.

The premises, equipment, and learning environments are organised in a way that meets the needs of the pupils in our care and complies with required

indoor space standards for early years settings. For more information, please refer to our school's health & safety and fire safety policy.

Outdoor access

Our pupils are provided with access to an outdoor play area as part of their daily timetable. Outdoor sessions are planned with developmental targets to support our pupils in exploring the environment and developing key skills. Our pupils also have an additional 15 minutes of outdoor access during their lunch period. Activities and access are planned in line with our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, including making reasonable adjustments where required.

Sleeping arrangements

Pupils who sleep during the day are monitored to keep them safe. A designated sleep area is provided with suitable mats and pillows. Bedding is kept in good condition and changed after each use.

A 1:1 therapist remains close to the sleeping pupil. Unless a routine is agreed with parents/carers, sleeping pupils are checked every 15 minutes and are woken after a maximum of 45 minutes. Parents are contacted if sleep is outside the pupil's usual routine. Sleep practices follow current government guidance on safe sleep and reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Risk assessments

All pupils have written behaviour plans that include necessary risk assessments for on-site safety, evacuations, and outings. Risk assessments identify potential hazards, specify how risks will be removed or minimised, and indicate when and by whom aspects of the environment will be checked. These assessments help ensure staff and pupils are not exposed to unnecessary risks and provide evidence of how risks are being managed.

Behaviour plans and risk information are shared with parents and discussed regularly during monthly meetings, ensuring a two-way flow of information. Relevant information is also shared with other professionals, such as social services, the police, or Ofsted, as appropriate, to ensure the setting is safe and pupils' needs are met.

Records are stored securely and accessed only by those with a professional need or legal right. Staff protect privacy and confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Act and, where applicable, the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Parents/carers can access records about their pupil unless a legal exemption applies.

Pupil records are retained in line with the BACB Code of Ethics for seven years after unenrolment.

More information can be found in the school's risk assessment and data protection policies.

Intimate care

There are an adequate number of toilets and hand basins available for pupils, with separate toilet facilities for adults where appropriate. Suitable hygienic changing facilities are provided for pupils who are in nappies. Parents supply nappies, wipes, and other necessary items, with additional supplies available on site if needed. A designated human waste bin is used for nappies and collected separately, and a cleaner attends during the lunch period to sanitise and reset the bathroom facilities.

Pupils' privacy is respected and balanced with safeguarding and support needs during toileting and nappy changing. An adequate supply of clean bedding, towels, spare clothes, and other necessary items is maintained to support pupil's care and hygiene needs. For more information on how we provide intimate care, please see our separate intimate care policy.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Safety and confidentiality within school

A separate meeting room is available where staff can speak with parents and/or carers confidentially. Staff also have access to designated break areas away from pupil's spaces, including a staff room, staff locker room, and kitchen.

Pupils are released only to individuals authorised by the parent/carer. If arrangements change, the agreed password must be provided and ID shown. A copy of the ID must be sent by the usual collecting adult before collection time.

Pupils do not leave the premises unsupervised. We take reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised entry. Visitors must arrange visits in advance by email (purpose and time), show ID on arrival, wait in the lobby to be collected, sign in, wear a visitor badge and receive fire/evacuation information. See the safeguarding policy.

Appropriate insurance, including public liability insurance, is maintained to cover all premises from which childcare is provided. No pupils stay overnight on the premises.

Pupil information

We record and maintain required information for each pupil, including full name, date of birth, and the name and address of each parent/carer known to the setting, along with information about any other person who has parental responsibility for the pupil. We also record primary carer details, the address the pupil lives at, and emergency contacts. Information is stored securely on Famly alongside assessment and reporting records.

We follow data protection law, safeguarding guidance and government advice when storing and sharing information. Written parental consent is obtained before sharing pupil information unless a legal requirement or safeguarding concern requires sharing without consent. Records are handled securely to maintain confidentiality.

Information for parents and carers

We provide parents/carers with clear, regular information on how EYFS and ABA are delivered. Monthly meetings review goals, progress and next steps. Daily observations are shared via Famly, with detailed progress data available through HiRasmus. Information on activities, routines and supporting learning at home is shared through meetings, parent training and daily observations, including how we meet SEND needs through our integrated curriculum.

Parents provide pupils' main food and drinks (e.g., lunch and snacks). Where food aversion programmes or food-based activities take place, parents are informed via HiRasmus data and, where appropriate, photos from sessions.

Our policies and procedures (including collection arrangements and procedures for a missing child) are available on our website and in the parent

handbook, with copies available on request. We also share staffing information, including the name and role of each pupil's key person (the Clinical Supervisor).

An emergency contact telephone number is provided both in the parent handbook and available on our website to ensure parents and/or carers can reach the setting when needed.

Provider information

We keep accurate, up-to-date records in line with regulatory requirements. Staff/therapist details (including home address and contact information) are stored securely on Breathe profiles.

External professionals who may have contact with pupils (e.g., OT and SaLT) provide contact details and valid DBS information and are never left unattended with pupils.

We keep a daily record of pupils attending, their hours of attendance and their key person on Family, our registration portal HUBmis and the daily schedule.

Our certificate of registration is displayed at the setting and made available to parents and/or carers on request.

Trips and outings

Pupils are kept safe on outings through planning and risk assessment. Risk assessments are completed by the Clinical Supervisor and Trip Lead, recorded with the trip plan, and submitted to the Headteacher for review and approval.

Pupils are supported 1:1 on outings (or 2:1 where required) for the duration of the trip. Two additional staff accompany the Trip Lead, including a registered first aider.

Complaints

We have a written complaints procedure, which is shared with parents/carers on admission of a pupil and is also available online. We investigate and keep a record of all written complaints and outcomes. Records are available to inspectorates or the regulator on request.

Parents/carers are given details of how to contact the Department for Education if they believe EYFS requirements are not being met. We inform parents/carers when an inspection or quality assurance visit is due. Following an inspection/visit, we share a copy of the report with parents/carers of pupils who attend regularly.

Legal duties

EYFS requirements operate alongside other legal obligations. We comply with relevant legislation, including employment law, equality/anti-discrimination law, health and safety, data protection and data collection requirements, and our duty of care to pupils, staff and visitors.

We implement policies and procedures to maintain compliance and provide a safe, inclusive and well-regulated environment.