



Rivendell School Child Protection Policy

To whom does the Child Protection Policy apply?

The Child Protection Policy applies to everyone at Rivendell School who will be responsible for or in contact with Rivendell School students during any activity or event associated with Rivendell School.

What are the goals of the Child Protection Policy?

The goals of the Rivendell School Child Protection Policy approved by the Board of Trustees on April 15, 2013 are:

1. To protect the safety and well-being of the children while participating in Rivendell School activities by creating a reporting system, as well as by taking measures to reduce the possibility of abuse occurring;
2. To make available materials to educate Rivendell School parents, staff and, when age-appropriate, students on how to identify child abuse and protect against abuse during Rivendell School activities; and
3. To comply with applicable law.

What is appropriate conduct?

Adults involved with children in Rivendell School activities and/or events are responsible for behaving in a nurturing, noble, and appropriate manner. This includes the use of kind and appropriate language, modesty in attire, and physical behavior that is healthy, gentle, and supports positive emotional and physical development.

- Common expressions of affection (hugs), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayer), or physical caretaking for health reasons are appropriate. Physical expressions should be gauged and tempered based on the response of the individual child, and must not be excessive or imposed upon another person.
- An adult (including faculty, staff, parent volunteers and visitors) will avoid being alone with a child (other than their own) in a private setting on campus or at a Rivendell School activity. When this is not possible or desirable (e.g., tutoring, discussing an assignment or disciplinary matter with a student), leave the door open and/or have another faculty, staff or parent present in the room at all times, or otherwise ensure public visibility.
- The doors to each classroom will have uncovered glass windows. Outside windows will have curtains opened when an adult is alone with a child.
- Avoid situations where an adult is isolated with a child (e.g., on a field trip, no adult should take a walk alone with a child in the woods).

What conduct is prohibited?

According to Virginia law (Code sec. 63.2-100), an abused or neglected child is any child less than eighteen years of age whose parent or other person responsible for his/her care* (such as a child care provider, foster parent, or anyone responsible for the welfare of a child receiving residential care at an institution):

- Causes or threatens to cause a non-accidental physical or mental injury;
- Has a child present during the manufacture or attempted manufacture of a controlled substance or during the unlawful sale of such substance where such activity would constitute a felony violation;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, emotional nurturing, or health care;
- Abandons the child;
- Neglects or refuses to provide adequate supervision in relation to a child's age and level of development;
- Knowingly leaves a child alone in the same dwelling with a person, not related by blood or marriage, who has been convicted of an offense against a minor for which registration is required as a violent sexual offender; or
- Commits or allows to be committed any illegal sexual act upon a child, including incest, rape, indecent exposure, prostitution, or allows a child to be used in any sexually explicit visual material.

*NOTE: Virginia law requires that mandated reporters report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to child protective services regardless of the abuser/neglector's relationship to the child.

Who is required by law to report abuse?

Under Section 63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia, certain individuals are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect. Those individuals include: 1) teachers and school employees acting in their professional capacity; and 2) persons 18 years or older volunteering with the school and responsible for the care, custody, and control of children.

Suspected child abuse and/or neglect must be reported to the Arlington Child Protection Services (703-288-1500) within 24 hours of the first suspicion. In the alternative, the report may be made to the Virginia Department of Social Services' toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline (800-552-7096). Mandated reporters who fail to report suspected child abuse or neglect will be fined \$500 for the first incident and \$1,000 for any subsequent incidents. Failure to report acts of rape, sodomy or object penetration may result in being charged with a Class 1 misdemeanor.

- This duty to report arises whether the suspected abuse or neglect occurs on or off the school premises.
- The law allows teachers, employees and parent volunteers to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect to the Headmaster. The Headmaster is then responsible for making a report with the appropriate authorities.
- The law does not require reporting of child abuse perpetrated by another child.

What is the procedure for reporting suspected abuse or neglect?

When abuse or neglect is suspected, the following procedure will be used:

1. The teacher, employee or parent volunteer who suspects abuse or neglect will report that suspicion to the Headmaster. The Headmaster may then meet with the student;
2. The Headmaster will take one of the following actions:
 - If there is no reasonable indication of abuse or neglect, no report is made or further action is taken.
 - If there is a reasonable indication of abuse or neglect, then the Headmaster will make a report to the Arlington Child Protective Services within 24 hours of being informed of the suspected abuse or neglect.
 - The Headmaster will advise the teacher, school employee or parent volunteer who initially reported the suspected abuse or neglect when the report was made, the name of the person receiving the report and provide any communication resulting from the report, including any actions taken, to the initial reporter.
3. Any report submitted under this policy will include all information which is the basis for the suspicion of abuse or neglect and, upon request, Rivendell School will make available to the investigating authorities any records or reports which document the basis for the report.
4. Any teacher or school employee, as well as any investigating authority, may talk to any child suspected of being abused or neglected or to any of his siblings without consent of and outside the presence of his parent, guardian, or school personnel. (Code Sec. 63.2-1518.)
5. The teacher, employee, or parent volunteer who suspects abuse or neglect, will be encouraged to speak only with the Headmaster about the matter. The strictest confidence will be maintained. Regardless of the Headmaster's conclusions regarding the matter, the teacher, employee or parent volunteer retains the duty to report if he/she continues to have a reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect.

I have read and agree with the above Child Abuse Prevention Policy of Rivendell School.

Signature:

Date: