



Serious Incident Policy and Procedure

Peopleton Brook Care Farm

Policy owner: Jake Payne, Business Manager

Approval date: 06/08/2026

Effective date: 01/09/2026

Next review: August 2027, or sooner after a serious incident, exercise or material change

Immediate danger: Call 999 at once. Any staff member may call 999 and does not need managerial permission. Make people safe, give first aid within competence, account for everyone and then alert the Incident Lead and safeguarding lead. This policy coordinates the response; it does not replace the Emergency Response Plan or delay a safeguarding referral.

1. Purpose and policy statement

Peopleton Brook Care Farm (PBCF) will identify, contain, escalate, record and learn from serious incidents affecting children, adult participants, staff, volunteers, visitors, contractors, animals, property, information or the continuity of the provision. The first priorities are life safety, safeguarding, preventing further harm and obtaining competent emergency help.

Responses will be calm, proportionate and person-centred. PBCF will establish one coordinating lead without creating a barrier to urgent action; maintain supervision and accurate accounting; share necessary information promptly; preserve evidence; meet applicable reporting duties; support those affected; and convert learning into completed actions.

One incident, several routes: A serious incident may require parallel emergency, safeguarding, health-and-safety, data-protection, employment, insurance and commissioner action. Completing an internal incident form or informing one external body does not discharge every other applicable duty.

2. Scope and responsibility boundary

This policy applies to all PBCF employees, workers, volunteers and contractors and to incidents on site, during PBCF-controlled transport, on visits, at host or community locations, online, or outside normal hours where the event materially affects people or PBCF operations. It covers children and adult participants, including people with SEND, disabilities, medical needs, communication needs or reduced capacity to protect themselves.

PBCF is a non-school alternative provider. It is responsible for its premises, activities, workers, records and immediate response. A commissioning school or local authority retains responsibility for the placement it arranges and its own statutory education and safeguarding duties. PBCF will give commissioners prompt,

accurate information and cooperate with reviews; it will not assume that a commissioner has taken an action unless responsibility and completion are confirmed.

PBCF adopts the DfE non-school alternative-provision voluntary national standards as its operating benchmark. They remain non-statutory as at August 2026. Any requirement linked to a particular legal status or registration - including charity, Ofsted, CQC or another regulator - applies only where the Business Owners have verified that it covers PBCF and have recorded the reporting route.

3. What counts as a serious incident

A serious incident is an actual or alleged event, near miss or developing situation that causes, or presents a credible risk of, significant harm, major disruption or regulatory consequence and requires coordinated management beyond routine first-line arrangements. Staff should escalate uncertainty: an event can be stood down later, but a delayed emergency or safeguarding response cannot be undone.

Category	Examples requiring serious-incident consideration
Life, injury or health	Death; life-threatening illness; serious injury; emergency admission; multiple casualties; significant infectious-disease event; poisoning, anaphylaxis or exposure.
Child safeguarding	A child missing or at immediate risk; suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation; serious self-harm or suicide concern; serious child-on-child harm; an allegation against an adult working with children.
Adult safeguarding	Death or serious harm with abuse or neglect suspected; a Care Act safeguarding concern; exploitation, organisational abuse or a person in a position of trust concern.
Security or behaviour	Serious violence; weapon; intruder; credible threat; sexual assault; hate incident; police attendance; emergency restrictive intervention; lockdown or evacuation.
Farm, fire and environment	Fire, structural failure, flood, utility loss, machinery incident, uncontrolled animal event, notifiable disease concern, major pollution, dangerous escape or site closure.
Transport or off site	Collision, passenger missing, unsafe breakdown location, failed handover, serious delay with welfare risk, or an incident during a PBCF-controlled visit.
Information and operations	Serious cyber or personal-data breach; loss of critical records or communications; major theft, fraud, damage or reputational threat; loss of safe staffing or premises.

A routine accident may still be legally reportable, and a serious internal incident may not meet a regulator's legal threshold. Severity classification and external notification decisions must therefore be recorded separately.

4. Roles and command

Role	Core responsibility
Business Owners	Provide governance and resources; ensure independent oversight where senior people are involved; confirm conditional regulator and insurer duties; review major incidents and unresolved actions.
Jake Payne - Business Manager and policy owner	Maintain this procedure, the serious-incident register, contact list, training and reporting matrix; normally appoint the Incident Lead; ensure commissioner, insurer and regulator decisions are completed and recorded.
Incident Lead	Coordinate the operational response, objectives, roles, log, communications, handover, continuity and recovery. The role goes to the most suitable available competent person and may transfer formally.
Appointed child safeguarding lead / deputy	Lead child-protection decisions, referrals, LADO liaison and advice on family communication. Current post-holders and contacts are held in the controlled safeguarding contact record.
Adult Safeguarding Lead / deputy	Lead adult safeguarding, consent/capacity and local-authority referral decisions under the Adult Safeguarding Policy.
First aider or competent specialist	Provide care or technical advice only within competence; record treatment and hand over to emergency services. They do not control the whole incident merely because their specialist response is required.
All staff and volunteers	Act immediately for safety; call 999 where needed; raise the alarm; supervise and account for people; follow the relevant emergency procedure; protect information and evidence; make a factual record.
Commissioner / host / transport provider	Cooperate at agreed interfaces and retain their own duties. PBCF confirms who is doing what and does not rely on an unverified assumption that another party has reported the incident.

Conflict or absence: If the usual lead is absent, implicated or unable to act, staff must bypass that person and contact the next uninvolved senior person, safeguarding lead, Business Owner or external authority. A vacancy or named person's departure does not suspend any duty.

5. Immediate response procedure

5.1 Protect life and stop further harm

- Raise the alarm, stop the activity and call 999 for immediate danger, serious or life-threatening illness or injury, fire, crime in progress or another emergency requiring police, fire or ambulance attendance.
- Give first aid within competence. Do not move a seriously injured person unless remaining creates a greater danger. Follow emergency-service instructions.
- Remove people from danger where the route and destination are safe; isolate machinery, vehicles, electricity, substances or animals only if this can be done without additional risk.
- Use the controlling procedure for fire, lockdown, shelter, evacuation, missing person, transport, safeguarding, medication or data breach. Do not default everyone to the Barn or another fixed point without assessing the threat and route.

5.2 Account, supervise and support

- Take the attendance/session list, visitor and staff information if safely accessible; conduct named checks and report any discrepancy immediately.
- Keep children and adults with known staff in the safest available location. Maintain dignity, communication support, medication and individual emergency adjustments.
- Do not send a child or adult participant home, release them to an unknown person, improvise transport or alter a safeguarding handover merely to reduce disruption.
- Separate people where necessary for safety or evidence, but do not question them repeatedly, seek a detailed disclosure, promise confidentiality or ask leading questions.

5.3 Establish control and a live log

- The first suitable senior person establishes an Incident Lead, location or remote coordination point, immediate objectives and safe means of communication.
- Assign only the roles needed: emergency liaison, first aid, group supervision, gate/access, safeguarding, communications, transport and log keeper. Record names and any transfer of command.
- Start a contemporaneous log of times, facts, decisions, rationale, calls, instructions, persons accounted for, information shared and outstanding actions. Use a single verified situation summary.
- Give emergency responders concise site access, hazards, casualty, missing-person, medication and accountability information. The current responder gate, exact location and alternative access must come from the approved Emergency Response Plan/site card.

5.4 Preserve evidence and information

Once life safety permits, secure the scene, equipment, relevant documents, messages, CCTV, photographs, device or system logs and witness details. Do not clean, repair, move, delete or alter evidence unless necessary for safety, animal welfare or emergency access; record any unavoidable change. Staff must not take or circulate incident images on personal devices.

6. Incident-specific routes

Incident	Immediate route	Key control
Medical, injury or death	999/first aid; Emergency Response Plan; inform Incident Lead.	Protect dignity and the scene; obtain emergency-service advice before family communication following a death; assess RIDDOR separately.
Child at risk or missing	999 if immediate danger; DSL/deputy; children's social care/police under safeguarding procedure; commissioner.	Do not wait for management approval or investigate. If serious harm with abuse/neglect is known or suspected, inform safeguarding partners for possible statutory notification.

Incident	Immediate route	Key control
Allegation about an adult	Protect the child; notify the case manager/DSL and LADO route immediately; police/social care if danger or harm.	Do only basic fact-finding needed to establish the concern; do not alert the subject, suspend automatically or conduct an internal investigation before LADO/police advice.
Adult safeguarding	999 if immediate danger; Adult Safeguarding Lead; local-authority adult safeguarding and police as applicable.	Apply Making Safeguarding Personal, consent and capacity principles without allowing consent questions to block action needed to protect life or others.
Serious behaviour or restraint	Make safe; first aid/999 if needed; safeguarding and Behaviour Policy; commissioner/parent promptly.	Record triggers, de-escalation, force used, duration, injuries and monitoring. Preserve body maps/CCTV where lawful and review the support plan.
Fire, security or hostile threat	Fire, Lockdown or Emergency Response procedure; 999.	Choose evacuate, shelter or lockdown dynamically. A hostile-incident all-clear comes from police/emergency services, not an internal assumption.
Transport or off-site	Vehicle/visit emergency procedure; 999 if needed; account for everyone; Incident Lead and commissioner.	Do not move people to an unsafe roadside location. Maintain manifest, supervision, safe handover and an end-of-route sweep.
Cyber or personal-data breach	Contain without destroying evidence; Data Protection and IT/Online Safety policies; safeguarding if content or access creates risk.	Record when PBCF became aware; assess ICO and affected-person notification; do not conceal, forward or investigate harmful content on a personal device.
Animal, machinery or environment	Stop work; isolate if safe; 999 and competent veterinary, utility or environmental help as required.	Protect people before property or animals; retain equipment and maintenance evidence; assess RIDDOR, insurer and specialist authority duties.

7. Communication and notification

7.1 Internal and emergency communication

Communications must be factual, necessary, accessible and consistent. The Incident Lead establishes an agreed situation summary and named spokesperson. Radios must not carry unnecessary medical or safeguarding detail. Personal messaging groups and social media must not be used for operational updates or images.

Staff may speak to emergency services, safeguarding authorities or regulators when needed to protect a person or meet a duty. The spokesperson rule prevents conflicting public messages; it must never silence a whistleblower, delay a referral or obstruct lawful cooperation.

7.2 Parents, carers, advocates and commissioners

- Tell the commissioner promptly about any incident affecting a child, placement safety, attendance, behaviour support, transport, staffing or suitability. Significant behaviour incidents should be reported to the commissioner and parent/carer promptly, ideally the same day.
- Tell a parent/carer or the appropriate adult contact on the same day where an incident materially affects the person, unless police, children's social care, adult safeguarding or the safeguarding lead advises that contact would increase risk or compromise an investigation.
- Give verified facts, action taken, current welfare, arrangements and the next update point. Do not name other people, speculate, admit legal liability or disclose confidential safeguarding information.
- Record attempts, advice to delay, what was disclosed and by whom. If usual contacts cannot be reached, follow the approved emergency-contact and safeguarding plan rather than releasing a person unsafely.

7.3 External reporting decision matrix

Route	When it may apply	Owner and timing
Police / fire / ambulance	Immediate danger, serious illness/injury, fire, crime in progress or urgent emergency help.	Any person calls 999 immediately. Use 101 or the agreed non-emergency route only when there is no immediate danger.
Children's social care / LADO	Child suffering or likely to suffer harm; allegation or transferable risk involving an adult working with children.	DSL/case manager follows local process immediately. Staff may refer directly if delay, conflict or absence creates risk.
Adult safeguarding	Reasonable concern that an adult with care and support needs is experiencing or at risk of abuse/neglect and unable to protect themselves because of those needs.	Adult Safeguarding Lead refers promptly under local procedures; emergency police/medical action is not delayed.
Commissioner	Any incident affecting a commissioned child, placement, safety, transport or delivery; significant behaviour incident.	Incident Lead or delegate promptly, normally the same day for a significant incident, with further verified updates.
HSE under RIDDOR	Only where the event is work-related and meets a RIDDOR category: qualifying death, worker injury/disease/dangerous occurrence, or qualifying non-worker injury taken directly from the scene to hospital for treatment.	The legally responsible person reports within the applicable statutory time and records the assessment. Over-seven-day worker incapacity is reported within 15 days; over-three-day incapacity is recorded even when not reportable.
ICO / affected people	A personal-data breach likely to risk people's rights and freedoms; affected people where high risk.	Data-protection contact records every breach and notifies the ICO without undue delay and, where feasible, within 72 hours of awareness when the threshold is met; high-risk affected people are told without undue delay.

Route	When it may apply	Owner and timing
Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	Death or serious harm where abuse or neglect is known or suspected; other statutory criteria in Working Together 2026.	PBCF informs safeguarding partners immediately. Only the local authority submits the statutory notification, normally within five working days of partners becoming aware.
Charity Commission	Only if PBCF is a registered charity and the event meets the Commission's serious-incident test.	Trustees decide and make prompt, full and frank disclosure; delegated reporting does not remove trustee responsibility. Record the status check and decision.
Ofsted / CQC / other regulator	Only if PBCF holds a registration, service or activity to which a notification duty applies.	Business Manager verifies the current legal status, event category and deadline; no school, childcare, social-care or charity registration is assumed by this policy.
Insurer / legal adviser	Potential claim, injury, vehicle, property, cyber, employment or other event covered by policy conditions.	Business Manager/Owner notifies within policy terms and preserves evidence. Do not admit liability or agree settlement without authority.

RIDDOR is a threshold, not a severity label: Calling an ambulance, a child having an X-ray, or an event being internally 'serious' does not by itself make it RIDDOR-reportable. Equally, a legally reportable dangerous occurrence may cause no injury. The written decision must use the current HSE test.

8. Recording, evidence and confidentiality

A serious incident record must be opened as soon as practicable and completed using contemporaneous sources. The record is not a substitute for the accident book, safeguarding record, restraint form, medication record, vehicle record, data-breach log or regulator form; cross-reference those records without unnecessary duplication.

- incident reference; date, time, location, activity and how the concern arose; actual and potential impact; severity and rationale;
- people involved, injured, missing, affected or witnessing; attendance/accounting outcome; emergency contacts and relevant individual needs;
- chronology of facts, decisions, instructions, actions, handovers and who held each incident role;
- first aid, treatment, restraint, police/fire/ambulance, safeguarding and emergency-service reference numbers;
- notifications and threshold decisions - including reasons where PBCF decided a report was not required - with date, time, person and confirmation;
- parent/carer, adult contact, advocate and commissioner communication; advice to delay or restrict disclosure;
- evidence secured, lawful photographs or body maps, CCTV/system logs, equipment status, witness accounts and chain of custody; and

- welfare, continuity, corrective actions, owners, due dates, closure evidence, learning shared and review date.

Records must be accurate, respectful and distinguish observation, direct report, professional opinion and unverified information. Access is restricted to those who need it; sharing is necessary and proportionate; retention follows the applicable safeguarding, health-and-safety, insurance, employment and data-protection schedule. Staff must not keep duplicate notes or incident media on personal devices.

9. Transport, handover and continuity

The Minibus Health and Safety Policy and Emergency Response Plan control vehicle, breakdown, collision, manifest, alternative transport and emergency-access arrangements. This policy does not create a competing route or assembly point.

- If the site is unsafe before arrival, stop or divert transport before passengers are dropped off; use only a pre-agreed, supervised alternative location.
- During an incident, keep people safely supervised until an authorised handover. Do not release anyone to an unknown person or change transport on an unrecorded telephone request.
- Where closure or delay is required, confirm commissioner and family instructions, accessibility and medication needs, safe driver/escort capacity and how every passenger will be accounted for.
- The commissioner decides its statutory attendance and education response; PBCF provides accurate session, closure and welfare information and does not mark a school register on the commissioner's behalf.

10. Recovery, support and learning

The Incident Lead, safeguarding lead and Business Manager will plan a controlled transition from response to recovery. Emergency services or statutory agencies may retain control of parts of the scene or communication. PBCF will not reopen an area or resume an activity until hazards are controlled, required evidence is preserved, safe staffing and welfare arrangements are available, and any commissioner or authority restrictions are understood.

- complete welfare checks and appropriate support for the injured or affected person, witnesses, family, children, adult participants and staff; avoid compulsory group retelling or unmanaged exposure to traumatic detail;
- hold a short operational debrief as soon as useful, without prejudicing police, safeguarding, regulatory, insurance or employment processes;
- appoint an uninvolved or independent reviewer where senior leadership, ownership, serious harm, conflict, repeated failure or public confidence requires it;
- review root and contributory causes, communication, supervision, equality impacts, emergency performance and whether previous warnings or near misses were acted on;
- create a tracked action plan with owner, priority, due date and closure evidence; update risk assessments, individual plans, training, equipment, contracts and policies;
- share proportionate learning with staff, participants, commissioners and partners while protecting personal information; and

- challenge or escalate an agency outcome if PBCF believes a person remains at unacceptable risk.
Record the route, response and final safety decision.

11. Training, testing and assurance

All workers receive induction on raising the alarm, 999, incident leadership, accounting, safeguarding routes, evidence, communication and record keeping. Role-holders receive training proportionate to their duties, and current contacts and deputies are maintained on the controlled contact sheet. Exercises must be proportionate, accessible and psychologically safe; surprise simulation involving weapons, violence or distress is not permitted.

The Business Manager reviews this policy and the serious-incident register at least annually and after any serious incident, exercise, near-miss trend, legal or guidance change, change of premises/activities/registration, or evidence that arrangements are ineffective. Assurance includes contact tests, overdue actions, reporting decisions, commissioner feedback and lessons from relevant safeguarding practice, adult safeguarding or sector reviews.

Appendix A - Staff immediate-action guide

Do now	Avoid
1. Make safe and call 999 for immediate danger. Give first aid within competence.	Do not wait for permission, argue about labels or put yourself in unmanaged danger.
2. Raise the alarm; follow the relevant emergency or safeguarding procedure.	Do not default to a fixed location when the threat or route makes it unsafe.
3. Account for everyone and keep children/adults with known staff.	Do not release, move or transport anyone on an unverified arrangement.
4. Tell the Incident Lead and safeguarding lead; bypass anyone implicated.	Do not investigate, ask leading questions or promise confidentiality.
5. Start a timed factual log and preserve the scene and records.	Do not delete messages, clean up evidence or take images on a personal phone.
6. Use one verified situation summary and record every notification decision.	Do not speculate, name others, post online or assume another body has reported.

Appendix B - Serious incident record checklist

- Reference, date/time/location, activity, reporter and Incident Lead;
- severity, actual/potential harm, immediate controls and emergency-service details;
- named accounting, supervision, individual needs, casualty/missing-person and handover status;
- chronology, decisions/rationale, calls, agency advice and transfer of command;
- safeguarding, commissioner, parent/carer/adult contact and regulator decisions;

- RIDDOR, ICO, charity/regulator, insurer and legal-status checks, including reasons for no report;
- evidence list, witnesses, treatment, other linked records and information-sharing controls;
- recovery/welfare, review findings, actions, owners, due dates, closure and learning.

Controlled details to verify before approval: The site emergency card and contact register must hold the current responder gate and exact location/What3Words, alternative access, emergency meeting point/call sign, safeguarding leads and deputies, local children's and adult safeguarding routes, LADO, commissioner out-of-hours contacts, insurer, competent health-and-safety advice, veterinary contact and verified legal/registration status.

Sources and related guidance

Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards — Department for Education, August 2025.

Emergency Planning and Response for Education, Childcare and Children's Social Care Settings — Department for Education.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and KCSIE 2026 from 1 September 2026 — Department for Education.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 — HM Government.

Care and Support Statutory Guidance and Care Act 2014 section 42 — Department of Health and Social Care / UK Parliament.

RIDDOR: Types of Reportable Incidents and Incident Reporting in Schools — Health and Safety Executive.

Personal Data Breaches: A Guide — Information Commissioner's Office.

How to Report a Serious Incident in Your Charity — Charity Commission, updated January 2026.

Peopleton Brook Care Farm Emergency Response, Lockdown, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Behaviour, Data Protection, IT/Online Safety and Minibus policies — PBCF controlled documents.

Approval record

Approved by	Role	Signature	Date
Jake Payne	Business Manager	Jake Payne	06/08/2026

Next review due: August 2027, or sooner under section 11.