



**Local**

**Area**

# **Risk Assessment LARA**

**47 South Street, Bishops Stortford, CM23 3AG**  
**See also: safeguarding policy; health and safety policy**

At White Trees Return to Learn, we believe every young person deserves the chance to reconnect with education, to rediscover their strengths, and to build the resilience needed for a brighter future. The RTL Programme aims to support young people who have disengaged from school, or who find themselves at risk of exclusion, by offering a carefully structured pathway back into learning.

RTL is a therapeutic journey that combines one-to-one teaching, wellbeing interventions, and enriching community-based activities. At its heart lies a commitment to understanding the whole child – their strengths, their barriers, and their potential – and using this knowledge to prepare them for long term success in education and beyond. RTL aims to bridge the gap between disengagement and successful reintegration into education. We provide a safe, consistent, and structured environment in which pupils can rebuild their confidence, develop strategies for managing challenges, and begin to see themselves once again as learners. RTL offers the stability needed before moving into a permanent school place.

Review date:

Reviewed by Governors:

Created by White Trees Group (RTL) January 2026

Policy owner  
Date Created

Head Teacher  
January 2026

Last review  
Next review

## INTRODUCTION – LEGISLATION BACKGROUND

### Role of the provider

RTL has a well-equipped team to make judgments about local risks, manage challenging behaviour, and keep children safe is an important element. Staff training, support and knowledge is therefore critical to this success. The RTL building has a fob security system, which means in order to gain access and leave the building, a fob is required. This minimises the possibility of pupils absconding or exiting the building without permission.

It is acknowledged that there are limitations of mapping in capturing a 'dynamic picture' but considers that such mapping could play a useful part in the wider assessments of risk. RTL location assessments should be kept under review and amended to consider any new risks as these are identified. The annual update will need to be proportionate and will not usually need to be carried out at the level of the initial assessment.

### Location assessments will need to address two issues:

1. Safeguarding concerns
2. Accessibility of local services

The Whitetrees Leadership Team has a broad understanding of the characteristics of the area where the RTL building is located. The team has an in-depth understanding of potential influences for an already vulnerable child to be a victim of crime, such as being targeted for sexual exploitation;

- Whether there is a likelihood of children placed in the programme becoming drawn into gang crime or anti-social behaviour in the local area;
- The suitability of the local neighbourhood as a location to care for children who may have already been victims of abuse and neglect; and
- Whether there are environmental factors that would represent a hazard to children, such as locations near busy roads.

Location assessments also consider any positive features in a local community that would offer benefits to children attending White Trees. For example, assessments could include evidence about opportunities for children to participate in leisure, sporting or cultural activities, or links with services that could support the child's ethnic or religious identity or work experience placements in the locality.

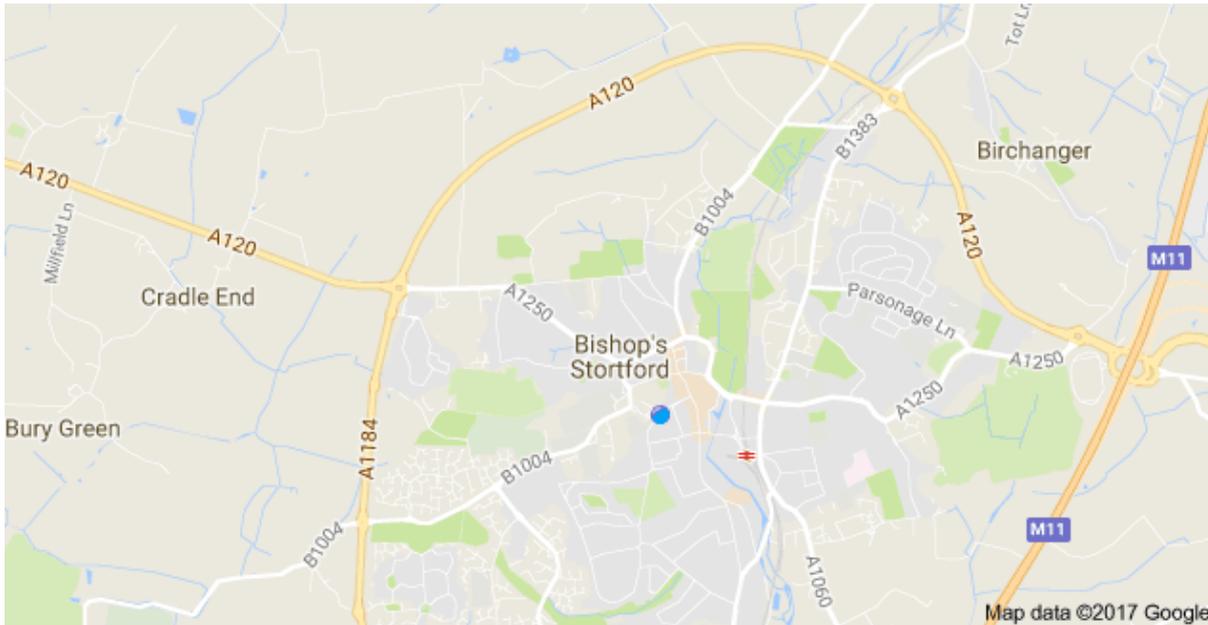
### Accessibility of local services

White Trees RTL is located on the outskirts of Bishops Stortford town, approximately 0.5 miles walk from the centre of town. Bishops Stortford is originally an old market town and has lots of history. The town itself is very affluent, due to the direct train links to both London and Cambridge it has become a hot spot for young professionals and families.

The town has a lot to offer, with an array of shops, clubs, and social activities, Bishop's Stortford hosts a local sports centre with a public swimming pool, gym and an assortment of other fitness facilities.

Approximately 0.2 miles walk from White Trees RTL there is a town park, with is approximately 30 acres. The park includes a skate park, Basketball court, an adventure playground, and a young children's play area. There is also a splash pool for children of all ages and a band stand. The field caters for a travelling circus/fair ground at certain times of the year.

The local train station is approximately 0.2 miles away from the Return to Learn site, with direct links to London and Cambridge.



#### **Popular attractions in the area include:**

Blake House Craft Centre (CM77 6RA) Approx. 11 miles away

Docwra's Manor Gardens (SG8 6QS) Approx. 13 miles away

Duxford Approx. (CB22 4QR) 10 miles away

Hatfield Forest Country Park (CM22 6NH) Approx. 7 miles away

Hatfield Forest National Nature Reserve (CM22 6NH) Approx. 8 miles away

Hedingham Castle (CO9 3AH) Approx. 15 miles away

Henry Moore Foundation (SG10 6DX) Approx. 11 miles away

Imperial War Museum (Duxford) (CB22 4QR) Approx. 10 miles away.

RTL is positioned at the back of 47 South Street, accessed through a small car park. South Street is a busy road with a high level of traffic, however this is often slow-moving due traffic control and pedestrian crossing as a designated high street. The road is situated adjacent to residential apartments, shops, and small businesses. South Street also gives access to Station Road, Newton Road. Station Road gives access to a train station. The surrounding roads are subject to a 30mph

speed limit. The roads around RTL are frequently congested, with slow moving traffic. There are two -way lights at the South Street -Newton Road interchange Hill site and pedestrian crossing lights situated to the side of the unit on Station Road. RTL is also within proximity to the River Stort.

### Services located near White Trees RTL are:

Herts and Essex minor injuries - Approx 1 mile

Harlow A&E – Approx 1mile

Bishops Stortford train station – Approx 0.2 mile

Herts and Essex high school- Approx 0.2 mile

Hockerill college – Approx 0.2 miles

Bishops Stortford fire station Approx 1.5 miles

Bishops Stortford police station Approx 1.2 mile

### Consultation with appropriate local services

White Trees already has links within the local authority to consult about any local issues or individual circumstances with students.

The key links for local services is detailed below and their responses to consultation on the location report.

Local Service	Key Individual and contact details	Feedback for assessment
Safeguarding (including Missing, CSE)	Bishop's Stortford Basbow Lane, Bishop's Stortford CM23 2NA  101  Telephone: 01279 730388 (Hatfield Heath Police Station) for non-urgent enquiries.	If any concerns are raised about a student or about a location ..... the Head of RTL ensures this is passed on where appropriate through the correct channels. A member of the residential service management and the service/homes manager sit on a scheduled meeting.
Local Probation / YOT	Hertfordshire YOT Nick Smith County Hall Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DP Hertfordshire (Nick Smith) 01992 556324 Hatfield (East Herts YOT) 01707 897 440 Fax01992 556 725 E-mail <a href="mailto:nick.smith@hertscc.gov.uk">nick.smith@hertscc.gov.uk</a>	Where Young Person will have a named YOT worker from their funding authority with whom the school will work with to reduce anti-social behaviour.

## SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

There are no major concerns about the location in which RTL is sited. There are low levels (if any) of crime, and the area is not highlighted by the local neighbourhood team as an area of concern.

There are no concerns of young people being drawn into gang crime or anti-social behaviour in the area because of the locality of the RTL building. The RTL location does not increase the potential for students to be targeted for sexual exploitation, the area in which White Trees is located has not been an area of concern at the local multi-agency CSE, Missing and Trafficking operational groups where information is collated.

Current areas of identified risk are low to medium risk. The overall risk of the location of the RTL building is assessed as being Medium risk due to the nature of the pupils that may be on role and their potential behaviours.

As RTL is a community-based programme, the main identified risk is that of pupils absconding from their allocated tutor, or from the RTL building. The area is busy with accessible travel links, therefore the staff are vigilant of this behaviour with appropriate staffing ratios, monitoring in place and risk assessments completed for individual pupils attending the provision, with risk assessments specific to the activity/pupil. The risk of absconding from the building itself has been minimised with the use of fob system, where you can only gain access and exit the building if you have a fob however, if the fire alarm is set off, the fob will de-magnetise. Staff are aware of this and are vigilant and will follow fire procedures accordingly.

### Risk Assessment and Risk Management Strategies

<b>Risk</b> <b>Risk factors</b> <b>Risk heightening factors</b>	<b>Risk management strategies</b> <b>Protective factors</b>	<b>Probability of harm occurring (1-3)</b>	<b>Extent of current harm / hazard (1-3)</b>	<b>Overall risk rating (1-9)</b> <b>1-3 low</b> <b>3-5 med</b> <b>6-9 High</b>
<b>Roads</b>  Crossing the road may be a risk to young people if they do not cross safely. The road in front of the building is a busy road.	Risk assessment plans to include whether individuals have skills to independently cross the road can do so with supervision; individual pupils may need support or social stories to support; pupils at high risk of dysregulation or absconding will need to be supported with individual risk management plans based on	1	2	3

<p><b>Local Shops</b></p> <p>CSE, Anti-social behaviour May be identified as venues where grooming and exploitation can occur. Local shops are also areas where anti-social behaviour can occur.</p>	<p>Pupils to be aware of the appropriate use of language and expected behaviour when out in the community. Staff Supervision will be 1:1 Pupils will receive lessons and/ or social stories for keeping themselves safe in the local area and this will include some age-appropriate training and input from local police.</p>	1	2	3
<p><b>Train station (absconding by train)</b></p>	<p>Bishops Stortford Train station is a busy, well manned station with gates and barriers at both entrance/exit points to the station. Any pupil with a history of missing behaviour attending the school will have an individual risk assessment which will include the proximity of the train station to the school. All pupils' behaviour will be managed in line with their own individual risk assessments and management plans. Staff will follow the absconding policy where necessary.</p>	1	2	3
<p><b>Local park</b></p>	<p>Although the local park is generally safe and a fairly quiet environment during the school day, staff monitoring will be on a weekly/ daily basis as occasionally there can be events such as festivals and fairs visiting. Specific risk plans to be put in place for individual pupils and dynamic risk plans based on individual needs. During times of different activities in the park, tutors will be vigilant, additional risk assessments will be drafted or amended to highlight risks associated with these events. A map of the park with entrance and exit points will be held for staff reference. Staff will follow the absconding policy where necessary.</p>	2	2	4
		1	1	2

<p><b>The River Stort</b></p> <p>Access points are situated in the town centre and on the outskirts of Bishops Stortford heading towards Sawbridgeworth.</p>	<p>The river its self is quite busy with a well-maintained public foot path adjacent to it. All young people will be prepared to and have understanding on the risks of unsafe behaviour near water ways. Staff will be clear on what to do in event of a pupil falling or jumping into the river.</p>	1	3	4
<p><b>M11/A120 road links</b></p> <p>Bishop's Stortford gives access to M11 via Junction 8. This junction is followed immediately by the recently constructed Junction 8A, which provides a free-flow link to the improved A120 that links to Stansted Airport.</p>	<p>The M11 runs approximately 3.4 miles away from the RTL site and can be reached via Dunmow Rd/A1250.  Staff are all aware of the position of the M11 and how it could be accessed by walking in approximately 45 minutes.</p>	1	1	2
<p><b>Local housing units</b></p> <p>The RTL building is situated opposite and below a number of residential apartments.</p>	<p>To date there are no concerns regarding the residential apartments around the building. Staff are aware of pupils' whereabouts at all times.</p>	0	0	0
<p><b>Adjacent car park</b></p> <p>The RTL car park is not exclusively used for RTL and so there are cars entering and exiting.</p>	<p>All pupils are supported and reminded of road safety awareness while in the car park; 1:1 staff ratio to be observed, supported and monitored during fire evacuation based on individual risk management plans.</p>	1	1	2

**This is a working document which will be reviewed annually or as required due to any other areas being identified which are felt to pose a risk which will be added and Risk Assessed as required.**

Published on	
By	
Chair of Gov Sig/Date	
Head Teacher Sig/Date	

