Local Area Risk Assessment
LARA – Birch House

Unit 12 Birchanger Industrial Estate, Stansted Road, Bishops Stortford, CM23 2TH

See also: safeguarding policy; health and safety policy; lone working risk assessment and procedures; individual pupil risk assessments.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to provide pupils with the confidence, skills and ambition to achieve a successful and productive life. We aim to ensure they leave the school with a 'new day, new opportunity' ethos and are capable of becoming positive members of their communities. To do this, we have 3 principles that underpin our policies, practices and everything we do:

- Everyone can learn, achieve and has the potential to be successful
- Positive relationships are key to success and are underpinned by mutual trust, respect and caring for one another
- We have high expectations in everything we do

W onderful
E xcellent
L ovely
C lever
O utstanding
M agnificent
E nthusiastic
(Acronym created by White Trees pupils)

Policy owner	WhiteTrees Independent School	**Last review**	
Date Created	10/9/26	**Next review**	10/9/27

INTRODUCTION – LEGISLATION BACKGROUND

Role of the provider

The school has a well-equipped team to make judgments about local risks, manage challenging behaviour, and keeping children safe in a range of situations and scenarios. Staff training, support and knowledge is therefore critical to this success.

The location assessment 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 White Trees Leadership Team has a broad understanding of the characteristics of the area where the Birch House 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.

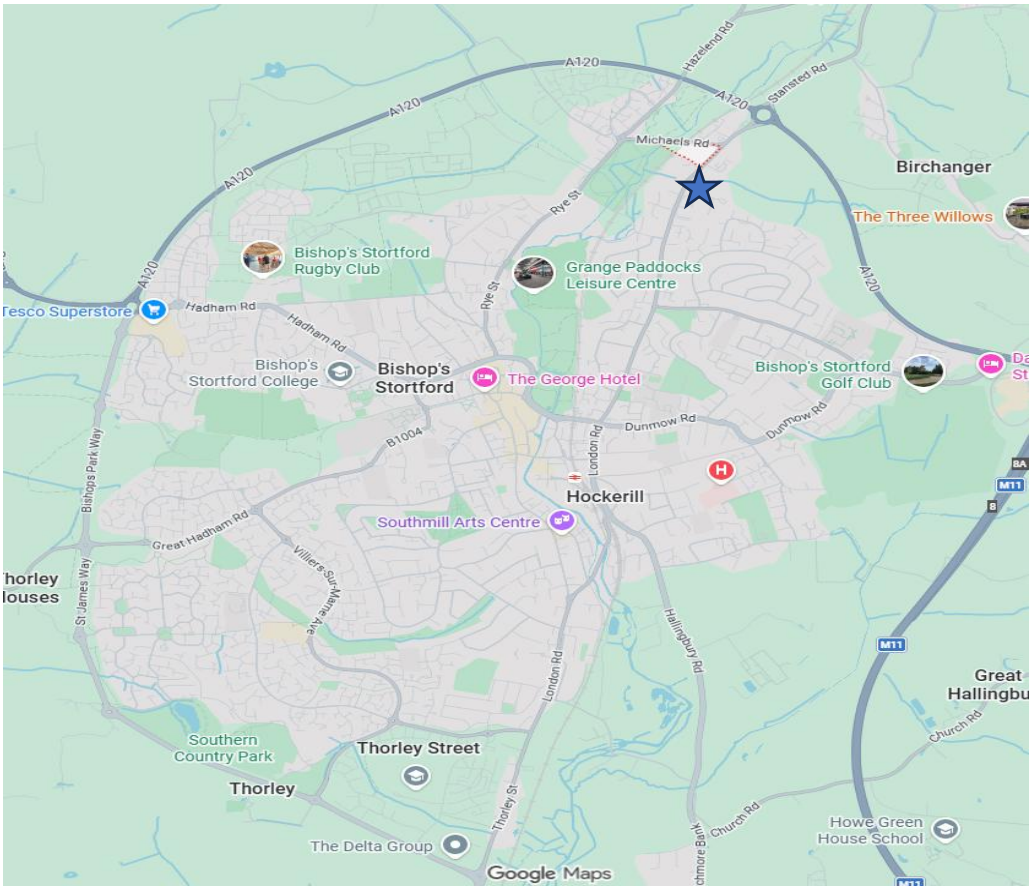
Accessibility of local services

White Trees Birch House is located on the outskirts of Bishops Stortford town, approximately 1.6 mile walk from the centre of town. Bishops Stortford is originally an old market town and has lots to 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 1.2 miles walk from Birch House, 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 1.5 miles away from the Birch House site, with direct links to London and Cambridge.



Popular attractions in the area include:

Blake House Craft Centre (CM77 6RA) Approx. 15 miles away

Docwra's Manor Gardens (SG8 6QS) Approx. 25.7 miles away

Duxford Approx. (CB22 4QR) 19.9 miles away

Hatfield Forest Country Park (CM22 6NH) Approx. 5.1 miles away

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

Hedingham Castle (CO9 3AH) Approx. 30 miles away

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

Imperial War Museum (CB22 4QR) Approx. 19 miles away.

Birch House is positioned at the back of the Birchanger industrial estate and is accessible through both the front and side entrances of the estate. The side entrance to the estate provides access to a 30MPH road that is often busy and does not have a pedestrian crossing. The front entrance also provides access to a busy road with high levels of traffic throughout the day that does not have a pedestrian crossing and is speed limited to 30MPH. The Bishops Stortford rail line runs behind the building's car park, but access is prevented by fencing and height.

Services located near Birch House are:

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Herts and Essex minor injuries - Approx 2.1 miles

Harlow A&E – Approx 12.1 miles

Bishops Stortford train station – Approx 1.6 miles

Herts and Essex high school- Approx 1.6 miles

Hockerill college – Approx 1.4 miles

Bishops Stortford fire station Approx 3 miles

Bishops Stortford police station Approx 1.6 miles

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 101 999 – emergency situation Telephone: 01279 730388 (Hatfield Heath Police Station) for non-urgent enquiries.	If any concerns are raised about a student or about a location on site DSLs (deputy head of wider curriculum, deputy head of RTL, head of safeguarding) ensures this is passed on where appropriate through the correct channels.
Local Probation / YOT	Contact: Jason Beaumont, Head of Service SASH and Complex Safeguarding Contact: Robert Samuel, Service Manager, Youth Justice Hertfordshire Youth Justice Service SFAR102 Farnham / Robertson House Six Hills Way Stevenage SG1 2FQ Jason.Beaumont@hertfordshire.gov.uk Robert.Samuel@hertfordshire.gov.uk	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.

	Phone: * Hertfordshire Youth Justice Duty: 01992 658441 * Hertfordshire Youth Justice Admin: 01442 454999	

SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

There are no major concerns about the location in which Birch House is situated. 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 Birch House building. The Birch House location does not increase the potential for students to be targeted for sexual exploitation, the area in which Birch House 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 Birch House building is assessed as being Medium risk due to the needs of the young people who are accessing it.

Risk Assessment and Risk Management Strategies

Risk Risk factors Risk heightening factors	Risk management strategies Protective factors	Probability of harm occurring (1-3)	Extent of current harm / hazard (1-3)	Overall risk rating (1-9) 1-3 low 3-5 med 6-9 High
Roads Crossing the road may be a risk to young people if they do not cross safely. The roads accessible from both exits of the estate are busy.	Pupils will not be required or allowed to walk to or around the Birchanger estate at any time and will be accompanied by vehicle to the parking area directly in front of the Birch House main door; pupils at high risk of dysregulation or absconding will need to be supported with individual risk management plans based on individual needs.	2	2	4
The River Stort Access points are situated in the town centre and by an approximately 5 minute walk out of the Birchanger estate.	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. Staff will	1	2	3

	accompany young people to the entrance of BH with a vehicle and so young people would not have easy or close access to the river.			
M11/A120 road links 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.	The M11 runs approximately 2.2 miles away from the BH site and can be reached via Stansted Road Rd/A120. Staff are all aware of the position of the M11 and how it could be accessed by walking in approximately 37 minutes. All pupils are supervised on a 1:1 basis and will be monitored at all times for absconding risks.	1	1	2
Local business units The Birch House building is situated adjacent to a builder supply merchant, a WT vehicle garage and a vehicle crash repair company.	There is a risk posed by forklifts, material transport trucks, car transporting trucks if pupils leave the Birch House parking area. 1:1 Staff accompany young people with a vehicle to the parking area to access the BH front entrance. Staff are aware of pupils' whereabouts at all times.	2	2	4
Adjacent car park Birch House has its own car parking area, however there is an adjacent car park that is not exclusively used for White Trees and so there are cars entering and exiting the area frequently.	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; pupils should only be dropped off to the BH parking area to avoid crossing the path of traffic from the adjacent car park.	1	1	2
Access to rail tracks Train tracks are adjacent to the general car park for the surrounding businesses – risk of young people accessing the tracks.	Access is restricted by a fence and the significant height difference of the car park floor to the track floor. Young people are always supported on a 1:1 basis; young people will be accompanied to the parking area of Birch House in close proximity to the BH front door.	2	3	5

Unauthorised Access Risk of unauthorised persons entering the building with malicious intent causing harm or injury.	Access to the Gym and office are restricted by a code and will prevent unauthorised access to the gym.	1	2	2
Unauthorised access to the gym or office by young people Risk of unauthorised access to the gym or office by young people resulting in injury or unsafe use of equipment.	Unauthorised and unsupervised access to the gym is mitigated by 1:1 supervision at all times. The access door to the gym area is secured by a code door to prevent	1	2	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.

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