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Child safeguarding as collective work

International Child Safeguarding Week 2026, Roundtable

Adam Jimenez-Schulman
Rising Academies

Rising Academies: Helping governments deliver better learning at scale

4
operating countries

1,400+
schools

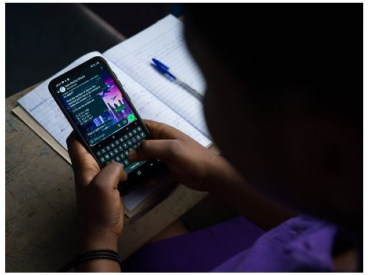
400,000+
children reached



Better teacher, better learning



Government partnerships at scale



Technology, AI and evidence for impact

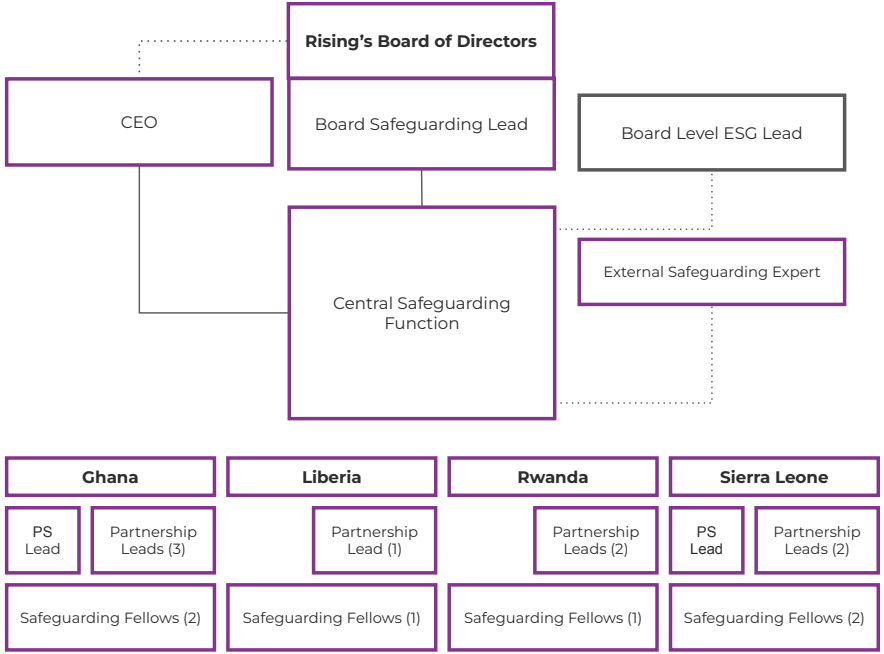
Our work includes operating 17 low-fee private schools in Ghana and Sierra Leone

- Here, our safeguarding responsibilities are most significant because we run every aspect of the schools.
- It's in these schools where we are able to test and iterate to build the most effective safeguarding practices.
- What we learn in our private schools shapes our safeguarding work at with government partners at scale.



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We have a comprehensive structure that supports our safeguarding work



Many stakeholders, one focus: evolving and iterative approach to safeguarding

Multi-year enhancing safeguarding strategy lays out the ambition and collective commitments to continue developing, implementing, testing and strengthen practice.

External expertise and perspectives

- An international safeguarding consultant and expert
- Keeping Children Safe
- Government partners
- Funders

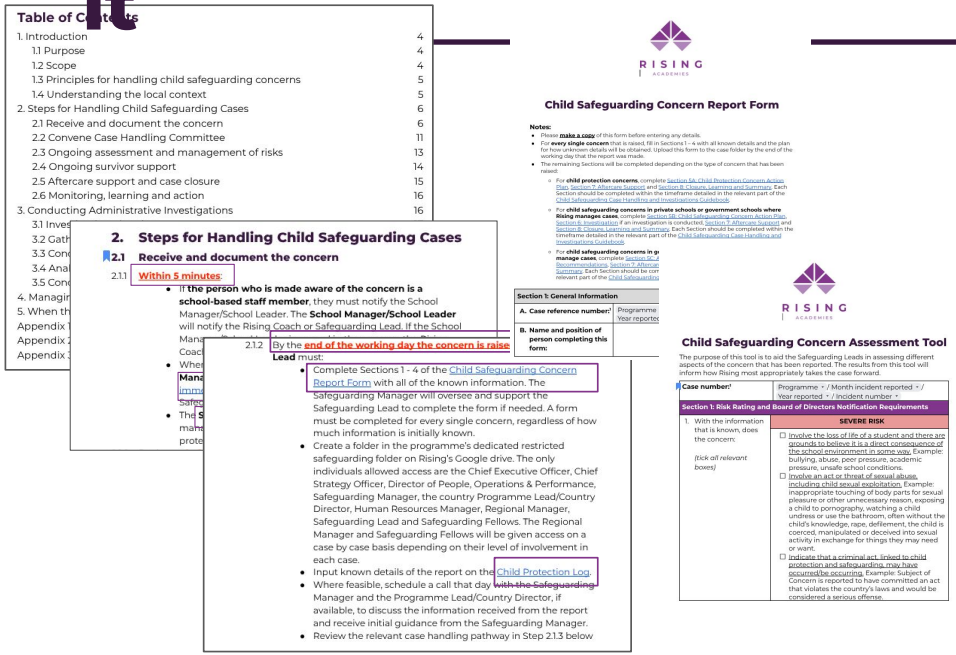
Governance and leadership

- Board
- Senior Leadership Team
- Central Safeguarding Function

Across and beyond Rising

- Safeguarding leads in all programs
- All HQ and school-based staff
- Students
- Parents/ guardians/ community members

Comprehensive set of guidelines and resources built with the people who use it



Before rollout

- Staff on the ground gave input on the revised procedures and resources before anything went live.

Through training

- Safeguarding Leads and Leaders were the first recipients of our survivor-centred training and the updated case handling guidance, and their feedback fed straight back into the materials.

In practice

- As teams have managed real cases, we have kept refining these resources. Now in their second year, they already look different from how they looked a year ago.

What this has produced:

- More detailed and adaptive survivor-centered case-handling guidance, timelines better aligned to execution practicalities, and additional age-adapted investigation resources, including interview protocols and student surveys.

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Everybody has a part to play: intentional engagement with all stakeholders

We developed stakeholder-tailored safeguarding materials that collectively contribute to keeping children safe in our schools.

Modules	M1: Rising's Safeguarding Approach	M2: Risks to Children	M3: Preventing Harm and Abuse	M4: Reporting and Responding	M5: Creating a Safe School Environment	Contribution to safe environment
Safeguarding team, Programme Leads	□	□	□	□	□	Shape the systems and decisions that schools rely on and ensure safeguarding delivery and oversight
HQ/ Central team (non-school-facing)	□					Contribute to systems and safeguarding culture
HQ/ Central team school-facing)	□	□	□	□	□	Directly visit and support schools, reinforcing expected practice
Coaches	□	□	□	□	□	
Teachers, School Leaders	□	□	□	□	□	Closest to students and responsible for their school's culture; often first to notice and respond
Students	□	□	□	□	□	Understand what safe looks like, who to trust and how to speak up
Families and Community members	□	□	□			Foster a shared understanding of safe schools through discussion and ongoing engagement

Students and families, front and center

Interactive student content

- Clear and detailed guidance for teachers to ensure consistency and clarity of delivery.
- Safeguarding sessions at five age levels, with participation that deepens as students grow.
- Age-appropriate scenarios and activities that allow students to engage in the material and strengthen their shared understanding.
- Connection to student-informed class and school-wide commitments to a safe and supportive learning environment - e.g. personalised posters that serve as a reference throughout the year.
- Fostering more ownership among students themselves.

Facilitated discussions with families

- School Leaders, Safeguarding Leads and PTAs build a shared understanding of safe schools and safeguarding at Rising.
- Space to discuss practices that may differ from what families have known and from what may still be common place in many communities - thoughtful discussions around corporal punishment and why it doesn't have a place in our schools have been particularly powerful.
- Early feedback from participating families has highlighted their appreciation for genuine dialogue and a deeper understanding of the rationale behind Rising's safeguarding practices, fostering stronger community buy-in.

Building safer schools through collective engagement & continuous improvement



Shared understanding and ownership

Genuine dialogue with staff, students, and families builds alignment around what safe schools look like—and why.



Distinct roles and responsibilities

Everyone has a part to play, supported by guidance and training tailored to their contribution.



Continuous learning and improvement

Expert input, board and leader accountability, & frontline experience and feedback from children and families continually strengthen practice.

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Thank you

Looking forward to the discussion

Adam Jimenez-Schulman
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