





'Dream, Believe, Achieve!'

'With God, all things are possible.' Matthew 19:26

1 John 1 v5 God is light; in him there is no darkness at all

Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Date:	November 2023
Policy Review Date:	November 2025
Signature of Headteacher:	
Ratified by Governors-Date:	November 2023
Signature of Committee Chair:	

Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. It is important for organisations that provide services to children incorporate into their recruitment and selection procedures measures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, or who are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

The impetus for a national safer recruitment initiative came from Sir Michael Bichard's report (2004) which recommended the following:

- Recommendation 16
Head teachers and school governors should receive training on how to ensure that interviews to appoint staff reflect the importance of safeguarding children.
- Recommendation 17
No interview panel to appoint staff working in schools and colleges should be convened without at least one member being properly trained.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:

- Legal duties on schools, FE colleges and a wide range of partner organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- The Bichard Inquiry Report (2004)
- Statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE, September 2023)
- Child Protection Policy
- Probationary Policy

Features of a safer recruitment process

- Set time aside for planning and structuring the process.
- Have clear job, role and person specifications, setting down boundaries and expectations of the role including a statement of responsibility and requirements for safeguarding.
- Clear messages about safeguarding will be sent to candidates from the outset.
- A statement about commitment to safeguarding will be incorporated in any job advert.
- Use application forms, not CVs.
- Obtain references before interview wherever possible; include specific enquiries about the applicant's background in relation to safeguarding and ensure references are given proper weight and consideration in the selection process.
- At a minimum, the selection process will involve a face-to-face interview and where possible another tool (role play, presentation, teaching a lesson, participating in activities with children under observation etc.).

- At interview, use probing questions into motives, attitudes and behaviours, not just skills and experience, and questions that cover safeguarding issues as well as other role-related areas.
- Seek information about criminal history and use it appropriately.
- Do not place too much emphasis on vetting checks.
- Ensure there is an ongoing culture of vigilance in the organization.

Scrutinising applications and short-listing

When carrying out the short-listing process, it is important to record objective evidence about the extent to which each candidate meets the criteria.

- Have at least two people involved in the process of scrutinizing applications and short-listing candidates; be seen to be objective and avoid subjective judgements.
- Take time to scrutinize applications carefully, returning any forms not fully or properly completed, identifying any gaps in the person's history or any discrepancies or inconsistencies.
- Apply the same criteria from the person specification to each applicant consistently.
- Do not short-list too many people – three or four should be a sufficient number from which to choose the right person. In the unlikely event there are too many applicants who meet all the requirements of the person specification, we may choose a randomized selection process; that way no candidate can claim unfair discrimination.

Obtaining and checking references for people seeking work with children

How a person has behaved in the past is one of the most reliable indicators of how he or she will behave in the future. It is vital therefore that references on people seeking work with children are seen and used as a tool to obtain relevant information to guide decisions about selection.

References should be sought on all shortlisted candidates and scrutinized prior to interview. This will help ensure that the school selects someone who is suitable to work with children and avoid taking on an unsuitable or dangerous person.

References are just as important for voluntary posts as for paid employment. A similar process should be followed when seeking volunteers for the kind of posts that require a formal recruitment process. However, prospective volunteers might not be employed or have previous experience of working with children. Consequently, the school may have to be prepared to be flexible about the kinds of people from whom we accept references and the nature of those references. Nevertheless, it is important to make background enquiries and checks on volunteers as well as paid staff.

Who should be asked to provide a reference?

If an applicant has worked with children previously, whether on a paid or voluntary basis, at least one reference must be obtained from the person or organisation that employed the applicant in work with children, even if that is not the applicant's current or most recent employer. This may mean requesting an extra reference where the person is not currently employed with children.

What should referees be asked?

All requests for references should enclose a copy of the job description and person specification. The referee's opinion should be sought about how the person meets the requirements of the specification and his or her capacity to carry out the duties set out in the job description. Every request must also ask the referee to state whether they are aware of anything that might give rise for concern about the person's suitability to work with children and, if so, to provide details.

In addition, requests for references in connection with current or previous work with children must ask not only about concerns in respect of suitability, but also specifically about whether the person has been the subject of allegations about their behaviour towards children. If this is the case, there should be a request for a comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken and decisions reached. The request for references should also ask for details of any disciplinary action the person may have been subject to in relation to behaviour involving children, including any in which any sanctions imposed are expired.

Requests made to the person's current employer should also seek specific confirmation of the details and responsibilities of the person's current post as he or she has described them in their application.

When should references be obtained?

Wherever possible this information, or confirmation that there is no information or reason that might cast doubt on a person's suitability to work with children known to the referees, is available before the interview. Relevant information can then be taken into account and, if necessary, issues explored further before or at the interview.

Scrutinising references

It is very important to read references carefully and thoroughly to make sure that:

- The reference is from the person indicated in the application
- The referee has answered all the questions.
- There are no vague or ambiguous statements.

It is also vital to compare the information about the applicant provided by the referee with the information the applicant has given about him or herself and his or her experience and background.

Where electronic references are received the school must ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

Interviews

Interviews are the most commonly used selection tool, but it is important not to rely on an unstructured or unplanned interview as it will only provide limited information and often what a candidate wants to tell you or how he or she wants to be seen. Each interview must be planned and ask probing questions to get relevant information. The selection process must always include face-to-face interview. However, in addition to interviews a range of selection tools can be used to allow you the best opportunity to assess how suitable a candidate is for the role and allow the candidate a number of opportunities to demonstrate their suitability.

It is vital to make notes during an interview, rather than relying on memory. It also ensures that there is a written factual record to refer to when deciding which candidate should be offered the appointment. This shows whether the person meets the criteria that have been set out and whether there are any concerns about a candidate.

There must be at least two people at an interview.

Interviewing volunteers

The same principles apply when interviewing volunteers, but it is important to make the interviews more informal than for paid staff. They should be very much a two-way process about selling the volunteer role to them. However, this does not mean that the interview should not probe into candidates' attitudes and motives and their suitability for work with children. This is even more important for candidates who perhaps have no previous experience of work with children.

Pre-appointment checks

Identity: importance of verifying the successful applicant's identity by reference to original documents. Candidates invited to interview should be asked to bring with them the necessary documents to verify their identity that will satisfy the requirements of the DBS in respect of the application for a disclosure.

DBS barred list: only required if the successful applicant will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available. We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months

DBS certificate: the successful applicant must be asked to complete an application for an enhanced DBS certificate and produce the required supporting documentation straight away. Everybody employed to work in a school is required by law to undertake an enhanced disclosure. All governors must undertake an enhanced DBS certificate. Governors are not in regulated activity and should not be checked against the barred list,

Qualifications: the successful applicant should be required to provide original certificates or diplomas for all academic or vocational qualifications required for the post, plus any that are relevant to the post. The documents should be checked to ensure that they refer to the applicant and it is also important to verify them with the awarding body.

Status: it is a requirement for some posts that the applicant is licensed or registered with a professional body. For example, in order to be employed as a teacher in a maintained school, a person must usually have been awarded qualified teacher status.

Prohibition: All those appointed to undertake 'teaching work' must be checked against the prohibition list and interim prohibition list before commencing in post.

Eligibility to work in the UK: it is an offence to employ someone who is not eligible to work in the UK so proof of eligibility must be checked before the offer of employment is confirmed. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards.

Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent.

Fit for Work Certificate: only once the successful candidate has been identified should the school contact Occupational Health to verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.

Probationary period

The appointment should be made conditional on the person satisfactorily completing a probationary period. Exceptions are teachers who have successfully completed their statutory induction period as a newly qualified teacher and who cannot be required to complete a further period of probation.

Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organisation we use that the organisation has carried out the checks (in respect of the enhanced DBS certificate, written notification that confirms the certificate has been obtained by either the employment business or another such business), on an individual who will be working at the school that the school would otherwise perform. Where, the position requires a barred list check, this will be obtained by the agency or third party prior to appointing the individual. The school will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Governors

All governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

All governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor).

Staff working in alternative provision settings

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

Monitoring and Review

This policy should be reviewed within three years or in line with any changes to legal duties to schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, such as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)'.