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## **SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY**

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(October 2024)

## The School Mission Statement

To live and learn in harmony,  
Caring for each other;  
Treating everybody as a sister and a brother;  
Reflecting Christ's actions and His message too,  
By striving for excellence in all that we do

**Date:** October 2024

**Review Date:** October 2025

The Chair of Governors must act reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of each prospective employee based on checks and evidence including: criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks and prohibition checks together with references and interview information. It is vital that the school creates a culture of safe recruitment and, as part of that, adopts recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children.

In order to safeguard children within our school, we carry out a number of checks on all staff, whether permanent, temporary, voluntary, school-based supply or agency-based supply, and maintain a single central register documenting that checks have been carried out.

### **1 Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the minimum requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people.

### **2 Statutory Requirements**

Whilst there are no statutory requirements for the appointment of staff in independent schools, in the interests of best practice and equality of opportunity, all posts will be widely advertised internally and externally.

### **3 Interview Panel**

The minimum constitution of the Interview Panel is as follows:

**For Appointment To:**

**The Senior Leadership Team**

Chair of Governors (or a governor if Chair is not available)

Representative from the Diocese (to be invited)  
Headmistress  
Member of the Senior Leadership Team  
HR Officer

### **Teaching Staff**

\*Governor  
Head Teacher  
Member of Senior Leadership Team  
\*HR Officer

### **Education Support Staff**

Headteacher  
Head of Early Years (if appropriate)  
Bursar  
\*HR Officer

### **Other Support Staff (Admin, Finance, Ict, Premises/Facilities)**

Headteacher  
Bursar  
HR Officer

The Interview Panel will always comprise a minimum of 2 people and consist of at least one recruiter who has successfully received accredited training in safe recruitment procedures (CWDC). Governors to be notified of all Teaching Staff interviews scheduled and, where possible, a Governor should be included in the Interview Panel.

\*HR Officer to be present at interviews where possible.

## **4 Inviting Applications**

4.1 Advertisements for posts – whether in newspapers, journals or online – will include the statement:

“The school is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post-holders are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS Check.”

4.2 Prospective applicants will be supplied, as a minimum, with the following:

- job description and person specification;
- the school’s child protection policy;
- the school’s recruitment policy (this document);
- the selection procedure for the post;
- an application form

- 4.3 All prospective applicants must complete, in full, an application form ensuring there are no gaps in employment.
- 4.4 All prospective applicants must give permission for a Barred List Check to be undertaken prior to interview, if shortlisted.

## **5 Shortlisting and References**

- 5.1 Shortlisting of candidates will be against the person specification for the post.
- 5.2 Where time permits, references will be taken up before the selection stage, so that any discrepancies can be probed during the selection stage.
- 5.3 References will be sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate will never be accepted.
- 5.4 Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or email in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.
- 5.5 Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.
- 5.6 Referees will always be asked specific questions about:
- the candidate's suitability for working with children and young people;
  - any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children;
  - the candidate's suitability for the post.
- 5.7 In the event of an employee's request to see a copy of their employment references, this request should be forwarded to the HR Officer. References marked 'Confidential' will adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998, which states that employees are not entitled to have access to any reference given in confidence by their ex-employer. A reference can be disclosed to the employee only if the former employer consents or it is reasonable for the new employer to disclose it without the previous employer's consent.
- 5.8 In the event of a Line Manager receiving a request for a personal reference, the following guidance must be observed:
- the reference should be marked 'Confidential'; and
  - submitted on headed paper to the Headteacher or HR Officer for approval/authorisation prior to submission

## **6 The Selection Process**

- 6.1 Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates.
- 6.2 Interviews will always be face-to-face. Telephone interviews may be used at the shortlisting stage but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview (which may be via visual electronic link).
- 6.3 Candidates will always be required:
- to explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment;
  - to explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to recruiters;
  - to declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure;
  - to demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

## **7 Pre-Appointment Checks**

Any offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of our pre-employment checks. When appointing new members of staff we always:

- verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available
- obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity
- obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities through our Medical Questionnaire
- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then we follow the advice on the GOV.UK website
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school considers appropriate
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate
- prohibition form for teachers
- prohibition form for management where appropriate
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (where applicable)

Online Searches In addition to the checks set out below, the School reserves the right to obtain such formal or informal background information about an applicant as is reasonable in

the circumstances to determine whether they are suitable to work at the School. In accordance with paragraph 221 of KCSIE, this will include online searches on shortlisted candidates (online searches). The online searches the School carries out may include searches of internet search engines, websites and social media platforms. Applicants are asked in the application form to provide details of their online profile, including account names, social media and professional networking site handles and details of websites on which the applicant is featured or named. This information will be used to carry out online searches. Applicants are not required to provide account passwords or to grant the School access to social media or professional networking account content that is not publicly available. However, if information (such as profile pictures and/or account bios) is publicly available when a social media or professional networking site account is locked and can therefore be viewed by the School it may be taken into account as part of the online search. Online searches may be carried out at the shortlisting stage or after an offer of employment has been made (but prior to work commencing). The School will not carry out online searches as part of its initial sift of applications.

The School will determine how it approaches online searches on a case by case basis. However, all applicants for a role at the School will be treated consistently with regard to online searches. Wherever possible, online searches will be undertaken by a person who will play no other part in the recruitment process (including the shortlisting exercise) or the appointment decision. In carrying out online searches, the School is looking for any publicly available information about an applicant that:

- may be relevant to their suitability to carry out the role for which they have applied;
- may be relevant to their suitability to work at the School or in an education setting;
- is of a safeguarding nature; and/or
- may have an impact on the School's reputation (whether positive or negative)

Any information generated from online searches will be entered in an 'Online Search Results Record'. Where online searches are undertaken on shortlisted applicants, any relevant information generated will be provided to the interview panel for discussion with shortlisted applicants at interview. Where online searches are undertaken on the successful applicant only any relevant information generated will be discussed prior to employment commencing. All offers of employment will be conditional upon the School being satisfied that the successful applicant is suitable to work at the School in light of any information generated from online searches.

In evaluating any online information for relevance, the School will use the following criteria:

- whether the information is relevant to the position applied for;
- whether the information is relevant to the applicant's suitability to work at the School or in an education setting;
- whether the information could have an impact on the School's reputation (whether positive or negative);
- whether the information calls into doubt the applicant's willingness or ability to uphold the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- the length of time since the information became publicly available and whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the information was published;
- whether the information reveals a pattern of concerning behaviour; and
- the relevant circumstances and the explanation(s) offered by the applicant.

For successful candidates, the School will retain information generated through online searches for the duration of the individual's employment and in accordance with its Information and Records Retention Policy after employment ends. For unsuccessful candidates, the School retains the information generated from online searches for six months from the date on which they are informed their application was unsuccessful, after which it will be securely destroyed

### **Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK**

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff. In addition, we make any further checks so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

We follow the advice on the criminal record information that may be obtained from overseas police forces, published by the Home Office, on GOV.UK. We also follow Department for Education advice on the requirements for overseas-trained teachers from the European Economic Area to teach in England, and the award of qualified teacher status for teachers qualified in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States of America

### **Procedure with DBS if appointed**

A new enhanced DBS with Barred List Information Disclosure Application will be completed if a current valid one is not already held. The level of DBS certificate required, and whether a prohibition check is required, will depend on the role and duties of the applicant, but it is standard practice for all employees to hold an Enhanced DBS with barred list check as the majority of staff will be engaging in regulated activity. In summary, a person will be considered to be engaging in regulated activity if as a result of their work they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children in an unsupervised capacity, or providing advice or guidance, or driving a vehicle only for children
- will carry out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, for a limited range of establishments that provide the opportunity for contact with children
- engage in relevant intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

A supervised volunteer who regularly teaches or looks after children is deemed not in regulated activity. The Department for Education (DfE) has published separate statutory guidance on supervision and regulated activity. However, the School policy is for all volunteers to hold an Enhanced DBS check.

Once the checks are complete, the DBS will send a certificate to the applicant. The applicant must show the original to the School before they take up the position, or as soon as practical afterwards. Should DBS clearance be delayed and it is necessary for employment to commence before it is received, the school will undertake the following procedure:

- Receive the results of a separate Barred List check

- Undertake a risk assessment on the member of staff concerned and the relevant area(s)/children
- Ensure that the person in question and relevant surrounding people are aware that the person is not to be left alone with children at any time
- Add a note to the Single Central Register recording the above
- Review these safeguards at least every two weeks

If a DBS Disclosure Certificate is held and is valid, and there has been no 'break in service' of longer than 3 months away from post, we will need to see and log the document and no further application needs to be made.

If the school knows or has reason to believe that an individual is barred, it commits an offence if it allows the individual to carry out any form of regulated activity. There are penalties of up to five years in prison if a barred individual is convicted of attempting to engage or engaging in such work.

### **Prohibition from Teaching and Management**

In addition to the DBS checks described, anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work (including EYFS keyworkers or learning support assistants) will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching.

Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by NCTL. Pending such consideration, the Secretary of State may issue an interim prohibition order if he considers that it is in the public interest to do so.

Prohibition orders prevent a person from carrying out teaching work in schools. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in a setting. The school routinely carries out monthly prohibition order checks with the Employer Access Online Service.

### **Section 128 Direction**

A section 128 direction prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an independent school. A check for a section 128 direction can be carried out using the Teacher Services' system. Where the person will be engaging in regulated activity, a DBS barred list check will also identify any section 128 direction.

### **The Use of Agencies and Multi-Staff Third Party Companies**

Should the school seek to employ staff via a supply agency or engage with a third party company (such as our caterers or cleaners), the agency/company must be able to confirm that all relevant checks have been undertaken by:



- Confirming in writing what checks have been carried out and informing the school if there is anything that may be considered relevant in the context of safeguarding children
- Providing evidence of the checks carried out on their central record and
- Ensuring that the staff member is aware that they have to bring in their DBS Certificate, proof of qualifications (e.g., QTS Certificate) and ID documents (proving their name, date of birth and address), on the first day of their work for the school.

The school reserves the right to terminate the contract with the agency without notice should the terms of safe recruitment practice be breached by the agency or the member of the agency staff.

## **8 Induction**

- 8.1 All staff who are new to the school will receive induction training that will include the school's safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices.
- 8.2 Regular meetings will be held during the first 3 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s).

## **9 Probationary Period/Reviews**

All appointments are subject to satisfactory completion of probationary period. The length of which is dependent on role. The school has the right to extend a Probationary Period if deemed appropriate.

## **10 Responsibilities**

SCR maintained by HR Officer – checked termly by Bursar and Chair of Governors.

### **Authorisation For Working Without/Pending DBS Clearance:**

The headmistress has discretion to allow an employee to start work pending DBS clearance upon receipt of satisfactory Barred List Check. A supervision plan with risk assessment must be in place and followed until DBS clearance is received.

(Form to be completed/filed: Headmistress's Permission for Employee/Volunteer to work in school without DBS Clearance)

### **Authorisation For Working With a DBS Caution Note:**

Headmistress to consult with Chair of Governors and take into account the following:

- Date of offence
- Age of Employee when offence took place
- Relevance of offence to post/role
- Full disclosure by applicant on Application Form

(Form to be completed/filed – Reviewed every 2 weeks: Headmistress’s Authorisation for Working in School with a DBS Caution Note)

## **11 Annual Declaration Form**

All employees are required to complete an Annual Declaration Form issued every September. This form requires the employee to confirm that there have been no changes to health or relating to good character which could affect their safe and efficient practice as an employee since employment commenced which have not been brought to the attention of the employer

## **12 Single Central Register**

The school keeps a single central register as a record of all employment checks. The single central record must cover the following people:

- all staff who work at the school
- all volunteers
- all members of the proprietor body

The information that must be recorded in respect of staff members is whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:

- an identity check
- a barred list check
- an enhanced DBS check/certificate
- a prohibition from teaching check
- a prohibition from management check, where appropriate
- a section 128 check (for management positions as set out in paragraph 99 for independent schools)
- further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK
- a check of professional qualifications
- a check to establish the person’s right to work in the United Kingdom.

For supply staff, the school also includes whether written confirmation that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of supply staff, and the date that confirmation was received.

The school has a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult; where the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual; where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and

that individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual. Guidance on referrals can be found on GOV.UK.

Where a teacher's employer, including an agency, dismisses or ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, they must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections 141D and 141E of the Education Act 2002. The Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if s/he finds there is a case to answer, must then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person.

## **Volunteers**

Under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who on an unsupervised basis teach or look after children regularly, or provide personal care on a one-off basis in schools and colleges will be in regulated activity. The school will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (which should include barred list information) for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity. Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information).

The school will always consider volunteers as engaging in regulated activity as they will always have the opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis, even if supervised. The DBS cannot provide barred list information on any person, including volunteers, who are not in or seeking to enter regulated activity.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 amended the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, removing supervised volunteers from regulated activity and applying a duty on the Secretary of State to issue guidance to assist regulated activity providers such as schools and colleges, to decide what level of supervision is required so that this exclusion would apply. If the volunteer is to be supervised while undertaking an activity, which would be regulated activity if it was unsupervised, the following statutory guidance must be followed:

## **Contractors**

The school ensures that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including barred list information) will be required.

Under no circumstances should a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised, or engage in regulated activity. The school is

responsible for determining the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances. If a contractor working at the school is self-employed, the school should consider obtaining the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account. The school always checks the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the site.

### **Visitors**

The school does not have the power to request DBS checks and barred list checks, or ask to see DBS certificates, for visitors (for example children's relatives or other visitors attending a sports day). The Headmistress and Chair of Governors should use their professional judgment about the need to escort or supervise visitors.

### **Adults who Supervise Children Off site**

We make sufficient checks to ensure that any adults who supervise our pupils away from the school site, such as on work experience or activity centre coaches/instructors, have clear DBS or Barred List checks. We consider whether the person providing the teaching/training/instruction/supervision will be unsupervised and/or providing the service frequently. Every effort is made to ensure our children are not placed at risk of harm.

### **Visiting Speakers**

Visiting speakers invited into school to talk to pupils in assemblies or in classes do not require DBS checks as long as they are supervised whilst in the school site. The school will ensure that they are suitable to be with children and that the subject matter is appropriate. Visitors conducting activities such as individual interviews with pupils that require them to be alone, must have enhanced DBS checks carried out.

The Prevent Duty Policy should be followed for visiting speakers to ensure that the risk of radicalisation is minimised.

### **Staff Leaving the School**

The school will also consider making a referral to the Department for Education and the Teacher Regulation Agency where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. Reasons for such an order include, but are not limited to, unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute or a conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence.

**This policy will be monitored via scrutiny of all appointment and recruitment records and will be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to legislation and statutory guidance.**