



MORE HOUSE
SCHOOL
KNIGHTSBRIDGE

Safer Recruitment Policy

Introduction and Context

The School recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected, valued and listened to. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

(Extract from the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

Policy Statement

The School is committed to operating safer recruitment procedures in compliance with relevant legislation and best practice. The purpose of this policy is to set out the minimum requirements of the School's recruitment process which 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.

Key elements of safer recruitment are:

- robust recruitment and selection processes;
- rigorous vetting and checking processes; and
- strong induction, probation, appraisal and performance management systems.

This Policy covers the first two matters and should be considered in conjunction with the following Associated Policies:

Associated Policies

Appraisal Procedures – Teaching Staff and Support Staff
Disclosures and Disclosure Information (Employee Handbook)
Equal Opportunities and Diversity (Employee Handbook)
Recruitment & Selection (Employee Handbook)
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Staff Induction Procedure

Planning and Advertising

- planning is vital to successful recruitment. Each recruitment plan will identify who should be involved, assign responsibilities, and ensure sufficient time is set aside for the work needed at each stage so that safeguards are thorough and not overlooked. For example, it is important to organise the selection process to allow references to be obtained on short listed candidates **before** interview;
 - a copy of the School's Recruitment and Selection Checklist can be found in the Staff Handbook on the S: Drive and Firefly, Appendix 5:
 - the School recognises it is important to be clear about what mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate. These requirements will be clearly set out in the advertisement for the post to prevent unwanted applications;
 - advertisements for posts, whether in newspapers and publications, or on-line, will include the statement:
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“The School is committed to safeguarding children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. All employees are subject to satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) Checks.

Inviting Applications

- Applicants will be supplied, as a minimum, with the following:
 - a Job Description which, in addition to explaining the job purpose, context and the main requirements of the job, will include information explaining what the responsibilities are regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children along with the need to update training in this regard, if applicable;
 - a “Person Specification” providing details of necessary qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge, and key competencies including criteria that reflects a commitment to safeguarding that is relevant to the School and the role;
 - the School’s Safeguarding Policy;
 - the School’s Safer Recruitment Policy (this document);
 - the selection procedure for the post; and
 - an Application Form.

Application Form

- All applicants must complete, in full, an application form which includes, inter alia, the following:
 - full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, current address, and National Insurance Number;
 - date of birth to ensure correct identification of the candidate (not be used for short listing purposes);
 - a statement of any relevant education, training and qualifications;
 - a full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, part-time and voluntary work as well as full-time employment, with start and end dates;
 - details/explanations for periods not in employment, education or training, and reasons for leaving employment;
 - a safeguarding declaration;
 - permission for details of their DBS to be retained on a confidential file for the period of their employment and for the School to carry out on line DBS Update Service checks where applicable; and
 - details of referees. Two employment references are required, one of which should be the applicant’s current or most recent employer.

Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed. A curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed Application Form. A copy of the School’s standard Application Form can be found in the Staff Handbook on the S: Drive and Firefly, Appendix 3.

Shortlisting and References

- Shortlisting of applicants will be against the “Person Specification” for the post;
 - where possible, references will be taken up before the selection stage, so that any discrepancies can be probed during interview;
 - references will be sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the applicant will never be accepted;
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- where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or email to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges;
 - where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges; and
 - referees will always be asked specific questions about:
 - the applicant’s suitability for working with children and young people;
 - any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children;
 - the applicant’s suitability for this post.

A copy of the School’s standard Reference can be found in the Staff Handbook on the S: Drive and Firefly, Appendix 4.

The Selection Process

- Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed applicants and where appropriate involve a taught lesson (as this is a good indicator of suitability to work with children from a safeguarding perspective);
- interviews will always be face-to-face unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a Skype interview. Telephone interviews may be used at the short-listing stage but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview;
- interviews will not be on a 1:1 basis but be conducted by an interview panel of at least two people;
- interviewers will be well briefed and at least one will have successfully received accredited training in safer recruitment procedures;
- the interview will include value based questions which will help explore the applicant’s attitudes in terms of keeping children safe;
- applicants will always be required to:
 - explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment;
 - explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to recruiters;
 - declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure; and
 - demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

Applicants will be required to provide Pre-employment Checks documentation when they attend an interview.

Conditional Offer of Appointment

Any offer of appointment to the successful applicant will be conditional upon receipt of satisfactory pre-employment checks and completion of any probationary period applicable. Regulated employment can only commence on receipt of an appropriate DBS certificate. This will be stated at interview and in the offer letter.

Applicants are required to sign a contract incorporating the School’s standard Terms and Conditions of Employment once pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed.

Pre-employment Checks

In accordance with guidelines provided by the Department of Education and Independent Schools Inspectorate, the School carries out the following pre-employment checks:

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- verification of identity and address. Where an applicant has changed his/her name by deed poll or any other mechanism (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) he/she will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change;
 - obtained and scrutinised at least two satisfactory independent, professional references;
 - proof of date of birth so that the School may verify and check any unexplained discrepancies in the employment and education history of the applicants;
 - validation of qualifications by review of original certificates;
 - for roles in regulated activity obtained a satisfactory Enhanced DBS certificate and confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Barred List;
 - verification of the applicant's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. It is the School's practice that all applicants to whom a conditional offer of employment is made must complete a Health Questionnaire. The information contained in the questionnaire will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements (e.g. proposed timetable, extra-curricular activities, layout of the School, etc). If there are any doubts about an applicant's fitness the School will seek a medical opinion from a specialist or request that the applicant undertakes a medical assessment;
 - verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
 - if an applicant has lived or worked outside the UK, make further checks as appropriate;
 - confirmation of applicants National Insurance Number (by review of P45, P60 or National Insurance Card); and
 - for appointment of a Governor, confirm they are not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State;

Induction and Probationary Period

- 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;
- new staff are paired with a mentor (usually the Head of Department or member of the Senior Management Team), who will guide the mentee in the first year of their time at the school; and
- the mentor will provide feedback to a Co-Head, who will meet the mentee at least once each half term in order to provide support and discuss the feedback received.

Retention of Records

If an applicant is appointed, the School will retain any relevant information provided on their application form (together with any attachments) on their personnel file. If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will be confidentially destroyed after six months.

The School complies with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice for Retention and Security of Disclosure Information. In particular, the School will:

- store disclosure information and other confidential documents issued by the DBS in locked, non-portable storage containers, access to which will be restricted to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead Deputy, the Bursar and the Co-Heads;
 - not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary. Generally, this will be for a maximum of six months. For successful applicants, the School will keep a record of the date of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure, the position in question and the unique number issued by the DBS;
 - ensure that any disclosure information is destroyed by suitably secure means such as shredding; and
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- prohibit the photocopying or scanning of any disclosure information.

Policy on Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant based on conviction or other details revealed, and makes appointment decisions based on merit and ability. If an applicant has a criminal record, this will not automatically bar him/her from employment within the School. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

Applicants for 'regulated positions'* must declare all previous convictions, including those which would normally be considered 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Failure to disclose a previous conviction may lead to an application being rejected or, if the failure is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. Failure to disclose a previous conviction may also be a criminal offence.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults, or to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence.

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. If the School receives an application from a disqualified person, is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or the School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children, it will report the matter to the Police, and the DBS.

**as defined in the Protection of Children Act 1999 (as amended by the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000)*

Assessment criteria

If relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation offered by the convicted person.

High Risk Criteria

If the vacant post involves regular contact with children, it is the School's policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences:

- murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence or
 - serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.
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If the vacant post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the School's policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the vacant post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the School's policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving within the last ten years.

Assessment procedure

If relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the School will carry out a risk assessment by reference to the criteria set out above.

The risk assessment form must be signed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a Co-Head before a position is offered.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, he/she can do so by contacting the DBS directly. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the School will, where practicable, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Contractors and Agency Staff

Contractors engaged by the School must complete the same checks for their employees that the School is required to complete for its staff. The School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before the Contractor can commence work at the School.

Agencies who supply staff to the School must also complete the pre-employment checks which the School completes for its staff. Again, the School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the School.

The School will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by a contractor or agency.
