

Policy

Whole School Safer Recruitment Policy

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Safer Recruitment Statement

SES is an equal opportunity employer and as such treats all job applicants and staff with equal respect free from unjustifiable discrimination.

SES is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students. A UK ICPC or equivalent police check is a prerequisite for all appointments.

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Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Sharjah English School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. Our safer recruitment policy complies with National Child Protection Policy in Educational Institutions in UAE and best practice from DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the safer recruitment policy are to help deter, reject, prevent or identify people who might abuse pupils or who are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the safer recruitment policy are as follows:

- To ensure the School meets its commitment to Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- The School aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at Sharjah English School.
- The recruitment of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provision of this policy.

Principal, Safer Recruitment Officer, Director of Finance and HR Manager, Headteachers and other senior leaders involved in recruitment will ensure that:

- The school operates safe recruitment procedures and will make sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school.

- All contractors and agencies comply with our safe recruitment policy
- Suitable training is provided to all staff involved in the recruitment process.
- The promotion of welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.
- No member of staff is employed without the Principal's approval

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors delegates responsibility to the Principal to ensure that the appropriate level of seniority relative to the job vacancy are involved in the recruitment process.

The Governor with responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding will ensure that:

- The school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with local governing bodies and legal requirements.
- The school complies with them.

Stage A

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

*If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare it to the Principal as soon as they are aware of the individual's application. The Principal will decide if it is ok for the staff member to remain on the interview panel.

Stage 1: Define the role

- Senior management will decide on the need to recruit
- A job description and person specification will be produced.
- The job description will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.
- The person specification will detail the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.
- The above documentation will be provided by the relevant Headteacher, Director of Finance and HR and/or the Principal.

The Job description and person specification are very important documents. No vacancy can be advertised without them unless authorised by the Principal.

Stage 2: Advertising

It is essential that all efforts are made to discourage unsuitable applicants from applying for a post at Sharjah English School. Our safer recruitment statement will ensure that our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our students will feature, where relevant, on everything that the school produces.

- Website
 - Advertisements
 - Promotional literature or video

- Information pack
- Job description
- Person specification
- Job-offer letter
- Induction training materials

This list is not exhaustive

- The School will advertise all job vacancies using various platforms including the TES, the school website, via a recruitment agent, LinkedIn or similar business platforms
- The School will include its own welcome pack which will include our application form with all adverts along with a job description and person specification, safeguarding policy, whistleblowing policy and staff code of conduct policy.

The Safer Recruitment Officer (SRO) will be responsible for placing all adverts. All documents that make up the welcome pack must be included in the advert. If for any reason some of the documents required are not available the Principal must give his approval to continue with the advert.

Stage 3: Agree Shortlisting Criteria and Process

- Shortlisting criteria must be based on the person specification and any relevant elements of the job description.
- These criteria must be applied consistently to all candidates' applications.
- Ensure these include specific criteria relating to working with children.
- Make sure the criteria (i.e. job description and person specification) are reviewed regularly to ensure they are up to date (responsibility of respective senior leader as above).

It is critical that both the job description and person specification document is available at this stage even if there has been Principal approval to advertise without either or both documents. The recruitment process must be put on hold until the documents are made available.

Stage 4: Scrutinise Applications and Shortlist

- All colleagues who will be involved in the interview process must check the application and agree on the short list of candidates.
- Applications of all shortlisted candidates have to be sent to the SRO for checking. Sufficient time for this should be given. No interviews should take place before the application form has been checked.
- The SRO or approved members of staff will thoroughly check the application form looking to identify any gaps in the employee's working timeline or inconsistencies that need to be explored further with candidates at the interview.
- The SRO or approved members of staff will check that the referees follow SES criteria.
- SRO will cross check identification documents.
- SRO or approved members of staff will check that the declaration regarding Criminal Convictions has been completed. If it has not then an email must be sent by the SRO to the applicant asking for the section to be completed
- SRO or approved members of staff will check for any medical issues
- SRO or approved members of staff will check to ensure the application has been completed properly

- SRO or approved members of staff will complete the Application Review and Interview Notes form and return to the interview panel to use in the interview.
- The Interview panel will ask the candidate about any queries that have been outlined on the application review and will record the answers. The Application Review and Interview notes form will be kept and included in staff files.
- When uploading identification documentation (i.e. copy of passport) where possible information should be cross checked. Check the date of birth on the Passport matches the date of birth on the application form.
- Check for obvious mistakes like spelling mistakes or inconsistencies in typefaces.
- Look at the formatting or text that may be more blurry than the rest of the document.
- Initial the copy and date the copy to confirm that checks have been made.

It is important that all declarations on our application form are signed. The applicant will be informed by email and also by the interview panel that the declaration (s) must be signed. If this has not happened then the recruitment process must be stopped at this stage until the matter is resolved. The Principal is the only person who can give permission for the process to continue if the declarations have not been signed.

Stage 5: Request references and proof of identity for interview

- Candidates should be requested to send a copy of passport photo page or other digital photo before their interview.
- References should be requested at time of interview or shortly after.
- All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references. which are considered satisfactory by the School.
- At least one reference must be from the current or most recent employer where the individual has previously been in paid work. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children.
- If the individual does not have a previous or current employer then they should try to get a reference from a current or previous educational establishment e.g. school, college or university. Where this is not possible then two personal/character references must be sought from someone not outside their family e.g professional contact - lawyer, doctor.
- If the candidate has previously worked in childcare organisations but these are not listed as a reference the school should advise the candidate that we require a reference from this organisation
- Ensure the employee reference is sent to a work address and not a referee's home address
- If the reference is from a school, always send to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors
- If applicants ask that references are not sought until after the interview then this can be agreed, provided the references are taken at that point.
- A deadline for return of references should be put on the request

If an identifying photograph is not provided then the process must stop and the interview cannot go ahead. If it is not possible to obtain a reference from a business email address the Principal must authorise a reference request being sent to a personal email address.

Stage 6: Scrutinise Reference

- SRO and senior leader
- Scrutinise references prior to interview if available
- Ensure you carefully read references and consider if there is anything you need to follow up at interview with the candidate or after interview

- Compare the information provided on the reference with what was provided on the application form and ensure that these match
- If you have concerns or any information on the reference is missing follow this up with the referee
- If you discuss a reference over the phone with the referee, ensure you make a written note of the conversation and also ask the referee to confirm the discussion in writing to you.
- All references must be approved and signed by the Principal.

Stage 7: Interview Process

Senior leaders or SRO

- Invite candidates to interview preferably face to face or online if this is not possible. Detail in the email what format the interview will take and any preparation required on behalf of the applicant.
- Only those involved in the shortlisting phase should be on the interview panel.
- There should be at least two people on the panel.
- One member on the panel must have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.
- Decide what selection tools you are going to use in the interview (if any) as well as questions – presentation, group exercises, written exercises or lesson observations.
- Ensure questions are structured and agreed beforehand and you know who is going to ask the questions and who is recording the answers.
- Use supplementary questions to probe any gaps or vagueness in answers (these will be different for each candidate).
- Ensure questions ask candidates about their own experience rather than hypothetical questions; questioning the candidate's experience is more likely to highlight any possible child safeguarding concerns.
- Ask about attitudes towards children and child protection and motives for working with children.
- Ensure you provide candidates with information about the school and the role as well as listening to them.
- Ensure you ask about any queries that have been raised from the Application Review.
- Clearly record answers and document decisions on the Application Review and interview notes form. This information should be kept.

Areas of Potential Interview Concern - During your selection activities you may hear things that would cause you concern and which you would then need to explore further with the candidate. These may include:

- Lack or no understanding or appreciation of children's needs or expectations.
- They appear to want the role in order to meet their own needs rather than the needs of children.
- Using inappropriate language when talking about children.
- Vagueness about experiences and/or gaps on the application form or unable to provide examples to support their answers.

- A maverick – unwilling to follow rules, procedures or work with others.

Any such concerns must be explored immediately after the interview between the members of the panel and recorded on the Application Review and Interview Notes Form.

Stage B

Stage 1: Offer of Appointment and New Employee Process

All offers will be conditional on the following -

Either a valid ICPC if they have lived and/or worked in the UK, or a current certificate of good conduct/police check from their current country of residence if they have never lived in the UK.

Agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the School's standard terms and conditions of employment

- Receipt of an ICPC or Certificate of Good Conduct.
- Receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the School considers to be satisfactory for the position
 - If the applicant has a teacher reference or QTS number the SRO will apply through COBIS for a prohibition check. It will consist of failed induction or probation check, prohibition from teaching, section 128 - prohibition from management and also any GTCE sanctions. Permission must be obtained from the applicant before we do this.
- The School is satisfied that all the prohibition checks detailed above have been cleared.
- Verification of the applicant's right to work in the UAE
- Any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK
- Verification of professional qualifications which the School deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where previously verified)
 - All successful candidates will have the initial job offer by email. This will be a conditional offer reflecting the above and will also detail salary, benefits and holidays.
 - A follow up email from recruitment admin with a detailed list of documentation will be sent
 - Once the successful candidate accepts the offer a full contract will be prepared along with an addendum detailing any benefits included in the job offer. This will be issued once we have received approval from the UAE security check. The contract and addendum should be signed and emailed back to the relevant admin person.

Administration Process

- All applicants who have made the shortlist should be entered into Sentry by the SRO or an approved member of staff.
- Once the selection process has been completed unsuccessful candidates should have their status changed to Application rejected and a copy of the interview comments should be uploaded to their file.
- The successful applicant's status on Sentry should be updated to In Position with the agreed start date

- The approved member of staff should then complete the necessary checks which will automatically be allocated to that role. All relevant documentation should be uploaded.
- For all successful applicants the New staff onboarding document should be completed. This is an inter departmental document that details where SES has reached in the onboarding process. It is important that this document is kept up to date at all times.

Approving References

- Make sure a senior member of management and/or Principal has signed off the reference as acceptable.
- Phone call to be made to the named referee. Or an email to business email of the referee (The International Task Force on Child Protection (ITFCP) recommends either as a suitable check). Must be on a landline (school, company etc.).
 - Referee to confirm that they wrote the requested reference.
 - Detail date, time, telephone number used and person who confirmed details on the reference.
- Both references should be uploaded to Sentry.

Child Protection course

All new staff must complete our child protection course within one month of joining.

Staff Criminal Conviction Declaration form

Staff will complete a DCC form annually on return from summer vacation which will update any criminal convictions or police involvement that may have occurred during the summer break or from the last DBS/Police clearance check.

Dealing with convictions

The school operates a formal procedure if an ICPC Certificate/police check is returned with details of convictions.

Consideration will be given to:

- The nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence
- How long ago the offence occurred
- One-off or history of offences
- Changes in circumstances
- Decriminalisation and remorse

A formal discussion will take place to establish the facts with the Head of HR and/or the Principal. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant/current member of staff during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Head of HR and the Principal will evaluate all of the risk factors above.

Overseeing Sentry

The Principal is in charge of ensuring that Sentry is being updated correctly and that our policy is being followed correctly. The Principal will check Sentry every month.

Prohibition Orders (Teaching and Management roles)

A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in School.

Proof of Identity and Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional status

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

Overseas Checks

If an applicant has lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months they will need to obtain a criminal records check from the relevant country in which they currently reside. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by the school.

Induction Process

All new employees will receive an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Record Retention/Data Protection

Personnel Files will contain any relevant information provided as part of the application process

- Digital Photo
- Qualifications
- Police check
- Application form
- CV
- Copy of job offer email
- Interview notes
- Signed contract

The documentation will be retained by the school for the duration of employment with the School. All information retained on employees is kept in a locked and secure cabinet.

Procedures for checking 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.
- Confirmation that these checks have been completed must occur before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the School
- Agencies who supply staff to the school must complete the pre-employment checks which the School would otherwise complete for its staff. Confirmation that these checks have been completed must be received before an individual can commence work.
- A confirmed register of contract staff will be checked on a monthly basis to ensure that any leavers/new staff have been taken off/added to Sentry and all the proper paperwork is in place. This will be a shared responsibility between the SRO and the Director of Operations.

Procedures for Visitors

All visitors must:

- Check in at security.
- Sign the visitor log book.
- Wear the lanyard that is provided at all times around the school.
- Be met at reception by the staff member who has organised the meeting.
- The staff member will be responsible for his/her visitor whilst they are on the premises.
- Staff members must ensure that the visitor is never left alone around any of our students.
- Staff must ensure that visitors have left the premises at the end of the meeting and that they have handed back their lanyard at security.

Procedures for Volunteers/Parent Helpers/ School Inspectors

- Valid police check (local, if residing in the UAE) ICPC or valid police check from home country if ICPC is not applicable (school inspectors)
- Copy of Passport, Emirates ID and Visa. - volunteers/parent helpers
- HoD or member of Management to advise what to do if a safeguarding issue arises. (all)
- HoD to inform volunteer/parent helpers, management to inform School Inspectors the names of DSL and DDSL (s).
- Volunteer/parent helper/Inspector to sign a form confirming that they understand what to do if there is a safeguarding issue and who the DSL and DDSL staff are and that they have read our child protection and safeguarding policy

Procedures for 1:1 Shadow Teachers

- Police check
- Copy of passport
- Copy of visa
- EID
- Sponsor's passport
- Sponsor's visa
- Letter of No objection
- Two References
- Three way signed contract – Parent/Teacher/Shadow
- Completed Self Introductory Form

Procedures for Peripatetic Teachers

- Police check
- Copy of passport
- Copy of visa
- EID
- Sponsor's passport
- Sponsor's visa
- Letter of No objection
- Two references
- Copy of certificate
- Completed Self Introductory Form

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be responsible for ensuring this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the school. This will be undertaken by formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit which will be presented to the Principal

Teacher checks conducted by COBIS

- Failed Induction or Probation check
- GTCE Sanctions: check to see if there are any disciplinary sanctions from the General Teaching Council for England
 - Prohibition check: confirms whether an applicant is prohibited from working within educational establishments
 - Section 128 check: checks the names of individuals who are barred from taking part in the management of any independent or maintained school.

Links to Documentation

- [Application Form](#)
- [Person Specification](#)
- [Examples of Interview questions](#)
- [Disclosure of Criminal Convictions](#)
- [Reference Request Form \(teaching staff\)](#)
- [Reference Request Form \(non teaching staff\)](#)
- [Reference Request Form \(Character Reference\)](#)
- [List of Documentation](#)
- [Application review and interview notes](#)
- [Yearly Audit](#)
- [Volunteer parent helper declaration form](#)