

Heathfield House School

Safer Recruitment Policy

Introduction

For the safety of our pupils and our school community the following procedures are followed to ensure staff, whether temporary or permanent, are appropriate to work with children. Caroline Goodsmann, Pauline Williamson, Rachel Sowerby and Camilla Edwards have all completed the Safer Recruitment training via an appropriate provider.

Recruitment Process

Advert – Adverts are posted on the TES and where possible will include a job description and a person specification that will define the role including:

- the skills, abilities, experience, attitude, and behaviours required for the post; and
- the safeguarding requirements, i.e. to what extent will the role involve contact with children and will they be engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

The advert will also include:

- our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including safeguarding checks that will be undertaken;
- the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification; and
- whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. Which means that when applying for certain jobs and activities certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found in the DFE DBS filtering guide.

Application forms - Where a role involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children, the school includes a statement in the application form or elsewhere in the information provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

The school will provide a copy of our child protection policy alongside the advert and practices and policy on employment of ex-offenders in the application pack.

Within the application form, the school requires applicants to provide:

- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number;
- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving;
- full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment;
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award;
- right to work in the UK
- details of referees/references (see below for further information); and
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

The school does not accept copies of curriculum vitae in place of an application form.

Shortlisting - Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records, further information can be found on GOV.UK website

For example:

- if they have a criminal history;
- whether they are included on the barred list;
- whether they are prohibited from teaching;
- whether they are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school;
- information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted;
- if they are known to the police and children's social care;
- have they been disqualified from providing childcare; and,
- any relevant overseas information.

This information will only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information will not be requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted.

Applicants should be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the application at point of interview.

The purpose of a self-declaration is so that candidates will have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

The school will:

- ensure that at least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise (it is recommended that those who shortlist carry out the interview for a consistent approach);
- consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them; and,
- explore all potential concerns

Employment history and references

The purpose of seeking references is to allow employers to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions. The schools will make every effort to obtain references before interview, this allows any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

The school will:

- not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern;
- not rely on applicants to obtain their reference;
- ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, the reference should be confirmed by the headteacher as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations);
- obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed;
- secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer;
- always verify any information with the person who provided the reference;
- ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source;
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided;
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate;
- establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post; and,
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

When asked to provide references the school should ensure the information confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide the facts (not opinions) of any substantiated safeguarding allegations but should not include information about allegations which are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious. References are an important part of the recruitment process and should be provided in a timely manner and not hold up proceedings.

Two references will always be requested and only after suitable responses will the person be employed.

Selection

The School will use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post. Those interviewing should agree structured questions.

These will include:

- finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children;
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role; and
- probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this.

The interviews should be used to explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing include:

- implication that adults and children are equal;
- lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children;
- inappropriate idealisation of children;
- inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children; and,
- indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours.

When candidates are invited to interview they will be asked to bring a passport/driving license/ birth certificate to the first interview in order to confirm their identification.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

Pupils/students should be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way. Observing short listed candidates and appropriately supervised interaction with pupils/students is common and recognised as good practice. All information considered in decision making should be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

Candidates will be asked to produce the original certificates of appropriate qualifications within the interview to ensure they have the appropriate qualifications for the job. If this is not available, the candidate should obtain a letter from the institute they attended to confirm their qualification. Copies will not be accepted as proof of the candidate's qualifications.

If staff have a current DBS, they should bring this to the interview. This is a multipurpose check as it encompasses many of the checks that are required. The DBS number and issue date will be recorded on interview sheets. For candidates that have recently come from abroad these checks are not appropriate. Instead they will be asked to produce a certificate of good conduct from their home police force (overseas police check). The school will apply for a DBS for new staff, including those who come from overseas.

All staff are checked on the Barred List (previously List 99) and checked on the 'Prohibition from Teaching' and 'Prohibition from Management' in accordance with the document 'Keeping children safe in Education' September 2022. These are carried out by Caroline Goodsman on the DfE portal.

The school has regard for Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. All staff sign a self-declaration of not being disqualified of being with young children.

If a disclosure is delayed before a person started work in regulated activity, the Headteacher may allow the member of staff to commence work:

- After a satisfactory check of the barred list if the person will be working in regulated activity;
- And all other relevant checks have been completed satisfactorily;
- Provided that the DBS application has been made in advance
- With appropriate safeguards taken (for example- full time supervision)

If the barred list is unable to be checked due to technical difficulties, the member of staff will not commence work on that day.

The candidate must be able to prove that they have Qualified Teacher Status. However, there are reasons why this would not be possible:

- * Trainee teachers undertaking teaching practice
- * Overseas police checks
- * Teachers working towards QTS through an employment based programme
- * Teachers trained overseas (outside the European Economic Area)
- * Unqualified teachers (e.g. Instructors), where the school has been unable to find a qualified teacher with the necessary skills and expertise.

Staff will be required to make a declaration that they are mentally and physically fit to carry out the post to which they have been appointed prior to working with children

External companies/businesses/teaching agencies

External companies/businesses that are used (for example Perform Drama, Mad Science, BEST club and Tech Club) are asked to provide the necessary documentation prior to the member of staff starting. Contact is made with the company/business to confirm that the appropriate checks have been made to their staff before they visit our school. On arrival, all staff from companies or businesses are asked to provide ID and their DBS for checking. Once at school, they are never left alone with children.

Volunteers/parental helpers/students/visiting speakers/visitors

Volunteers/parental helpers/students – if any volunteers/parental helpers/students/visitors come to the school, a risk assessment will be carried out to determine which checks are needed depending on the type of activity and the role they will partake in during the visit. ID will always be checked on arrival and they will be contacted prior to their visit to explain what is expected. Once at school, they are never left alone with children.

Visiting speakers – if any visiting speakers are invited into school, they are asked to provide content of what they will discuss to ensure that it is appropriate. These visitors are never left on their own and a member of staff is always present in any workshops. ID will always be checked on arrival.

Trades people

Trades people often come to school to check/deliver/fix things for school. Any trades job that requires time, will be carried out when children are not on the premises. However, if a task has to be carried out during the day, a member of staff is allocated to escort the tradesperson for the entire time they are in the building. Usually trades people are recognisable via their uniform or as they are regular visitors, others may be asked for ID to verify who are they and what they are checking/delivering/fixing. Usually trades people do not have DBS's therefore all people who fall under this category are never left alone once they enter our school sites.

Induction Programme

A full induction programme has been developed for all staff in order to ensure they have a full understanding of the importance of safeguarding, the signs of abuse and what they should do if a child makes a disclosure to them.

Storage of application information

All information obtained about any candidate will be stored in a locked room that only the management team will have access to.

Supply Teachers

Since opening in September 2004, the school has not used supply teachers and does not intend on using these. All staff absences or anytime supply teachers could be used, the management team work out the best provision for pupils by covering it with current staff members.

If supply teachers for any reason were required, the company where the supply teachers were sourced from would have to supply evidence in writing that the correct checks were carried out before the teachers started at school. Once this has been confirmed, when the member of supply staff comes to school, we would need to see their ID and DBS.

Policy Reviewed 4th January 2023 by Caroline Goodsman

Next review date 3rd January 2024