



# Safer Recruitment Policy

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## 1. Statement of Intent

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'Safer recruitment' is the safeguarding and protection of pupils during the recruitment and selection process. Its overall purpose is to help identify and deter or reject individuals who are deemed unsuitable to work with children.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

It is of paramount importance that there are policies and procedures in place to keep pupils safe from those considered unsuitable to work with children. We have a responsibility to ensure that careful selection, vetting and supervisory procedures are in place to prevent our pupils being exposed to potential abusers.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Outline the school's recruitment procedure and how the school ensures safer recruitment is considered at all levels of the recruitment process.
- Embed a robust safeguarding culture into the recruitment practices of the school.
- Help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils, or are otherwise unsuited to working with them.
- Ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- Ensure safe and equitable recruitment and selection is conducted at all times.
- Ensure that we meet our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out the necessary safer recruitment checks.

The school does not support arrangements for volunteers to work unsupervised with our pupils.

No persons over the age of 16, that are not on role or employed at St Edward's School, reside in the same premises as pupils.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

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The Board of Governors is responsible for:

- Agreeing and monitoring effective policies to ensure recruitment at the school is in accordance with legislation.
- Ensuring that staff recruitment is as safe as possible, as well as fair and compliant with the relevant legislation.
- Ensuring a member of the board is on the recruitment panel for Senior Leadership positions.
- Monitoring the school's Single Central Record (SCR) to ensure that the necessary vetting checks for employees are carried out.

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- Appointing an appropriate recruitment panel, with a preferred minimum of at least three members and where possible, always an odd number so majority votes can be cast.

- Ensuring that at least one member of the recruitment panel has undergone safer recruitment training, within the past three years.
- Ensuring that all members of the recruitment panel understand their role, i.e. advisory or decision-making.
- Ensuring that all members of the recruitment panel are familiar with their obligations with regards to safer recruitment, as set out in KCSIE.
- Monitoring the school's SCR to ensure that the necessary vetting checks for employees are carried out.
- Ensuring appropriate checks have been carried out on staff, volunteers, contractors and agency workers working within the school.
- Ensuring that equal opportunities are established and implemented throughout the recruitment process.
- Ensuring that appropriate supervision of employees and volunteers is organised, and for promoting the safety and wellbeing of pupils generally and throughout the recruitment process.
- Ensuring that the successful candidate receives the appropriate training and induction programme, including safeguarding.
- Monitoring the advertising of vacancies, assessing how they are being advertised and whether the adverts are maximising all of the opportunities to attract the appropriate candidates.
- Accommodating the needs of new employees and making reasonable adjustments when necessary.
- Ensuring that all relevant staff members are familiarised with this policy.

The recruitment panel is responsible for:

- Managing the entire recruitment process.
- Overseeing the preparation of recruitment packs, including the advert, job description, person specification and application form – ensuring that these documents contain a clear message about safeguarding, the checks that will be carried out and that references will be sought.
- Shortlisting the potential candidates with the aim of reducing the application field and identifying those with the potential to effectively undertake the role.
- Ensuring that the interview addresses safeguarding practices, the candidate's motivation, their understanding of the school's mission and ethos, reasons for being interested in joining the school, and attitude to working with children.
- Where possible, ensuring that the shortlisting panel and interviewing panel are comprised of the same people.
- Reviewing and scrutinising candidates' applications and identifying any gaps in education and employment history.
- Ensuring the recruitment process is carried out in line with the relevant school policies.
- Ensuring that the candidate chosen to fill a vacancy is suitable for the role.
- Discussing with the DSL the suitability of a candidate when a reference has disclosed safeguarding concerns or prior allegations.
- Determining the salary to be offered, with agreement by the Finance Manager.

- Agreeing with the successful candidate when other members of the school community will be informed about their appointment, including staff members and parents/carers if relevant.

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Issuing application packs to prospective candidates and acting as a point of contact between candidates and the school.
- Preparing the recruitment panel to conduct interviews.
- Ensuring application/interview packs contain necessary documentation, including self-declaration form.
- Organising interviews with shortlisted candidates.
- Ensuring that references are requested and verified.
- Verifying identity of candidates and their right to work in the UK on arrival for interview.
- Ensuring that all references are handled in line with the Data Protection Policy and relevant legislation.
- Formally issuing offer of employment and terms and conditions.
- Conducting the necessary vetting checks for all employees and maintaining the SCR.

During the recruitment process, and especially during the initial stages, the Senior Leadership Team and recruitment panel will be watchful of candidates displaying the following characteristics:

- No understanding or appreciation of children's needs.
- Expressing that they want the role to meet their needs at the expense of children.
- Using inappropriate language in relation to children.
- Expressing extreme views or views that do not support safeguarding practices.
- Displaying unclear boundaries with children.
- Providing vague answers when asked about their experience and being unable to explain gaps in their employment.
- Behaviours outside of employment that may present a transferable risk.

### **3. Planning, advertising, shortlisting and interviewing**

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Once a vacancy has been identified, the school will allow an appropriate amount of time for planning and structuring the recruitment process.

The job information and associated documents will be published online. The full requirements of the role will be clearly explained, including the requirement to undergo safer-recruitment checks.

#### **3.1. Advertising**

- All vacancies will be advertised unless there is a good reason not to do so.
- Vacancies will be advertised through external media with due consideration to the school's Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, ensuring that the advertisement reaches a wide range of groups.
- We will make clear our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
- The full requirements of the role will be clearly explained including to what extent the role will involve contact with children.

- The skills, abilities, experience, attitudes and behaviours required for the post will also be published.
- The school's safeguarding statement and reference to safeguarding checks and DBS requirements will be included, in order that an explicit, unequivocal statement may discourage those with a questionable background or motive.
- Information will include whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.
- Advertisements will contain a statement of commitment to ensuring equal opportunities.
- Recruitment packs will include, or link to, a job description, person specification and detail the closing date.
- Application forms will be accessible on the school's website.

When an advert receives a response, Administration staff will ensure that candidates receive the full application pack.

### **3.2. Application**

- Application packs will be provided to anybody who expresses an interest in an advertised post.
- Applicants will be reminded in the application form, or elsewhere, that it is an offence to apply for the role if they are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.
- The application pack is to include the following;
  - Application form
  - A copy of the advertisement
  - Job description
  - Person specification
  - The school's statement of purpose
  - Any relevant school policies, e.g. the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and DBS policy including recruitment of ex-offenders policy statement.
- A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is not an acceptable alternative to a fully completed application form. The school will only accept a CV alongside a completed application form.
- Applicants are required to provide information including three named referees, full employment history together with explanations for any apparent or implied gaps in their employment and a statement of their personal qualities and an explanation of how they meet the person specification.

### **3.3. Shortlisting**

- A minimum of two members of the panel are to be involved in shortlisting applicants for interview. Where possible, the full panel should be involved.
- The school will ensure that the shortlisting process is as systematic as possible.
- Candidates will be assessed against the same shortlisting criteria to ensure a fair process.
- Those shortlisting will assess whether there are any inconsistencies or gaps in the candidate's employment and consider the reasons given for them.
- All applications will be replied to, notifying candidates whether they have been shortlisted or not.

Shortlisted candidates will be:

- Invited to attend for interview.
- Required to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or disclosure of any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, including:
  - Information of any criminal offences committed.
  - If they are known to the police and children's social care services.
  - Inclusion on prohibition or barred lists.
  - Any relevant overseas information.

(Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records, further information can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)).

- Required to sign a declaration which confirms that the information they have provided is true.
- Subject to an online search. Searches are proportionate and based on information available in the public domain. Online searches solely aim to help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school may want to explore with the applicant at interview. Online searches will be carried out by an individual who is independent of the recruitment process to minimise the risk of bias or discrimination and to ensure that only relevant information is considered. The person responsible for carrying out online searches will have due regard to Part three of KCSIE. The school will ensure that candidates are given an opportunity to discuss any concerns raised by the online search.

### **3.4. Interview**

- The candidates to be invited for interview will be contacted by Administration staff and suitable interview times will be decided.
- The recruitment panel will ensure that all shortlisted candidates receive information about the interview arrangements, how they will be conducted, the areas that will be explored and what documents they should bring.
- All applicants invited to interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken.
- A check of identity and the right to work in the UK must be made on arrival against official documents (i.e. UK Passport, Birth Certificate and P45/P60 or visa documentation). A birth certificate, where available, is required to verify identity. ID is checked in line with Government guidance.
- Face-to-face interviews are conducted wherever possible.
- A minimum panel of three members is preferred (and if possible, always an odd number to allow majority votes to be cast) will interview applicants.
- At least one member of the panel must have completed safer recruitment training within the past three years.
- The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification, their stated and apparent attitudes towards children, and their suitability to work with children and young people.
- It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps or frequency of changing employment which have been identified.
- Candidates will be asked standard questions and interview notes will be placed on the successful candidate's personnel file.
- Interview questions seek to:

- Address safeguarding practices.
- Find out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children.
- Explore their skills and ask for examples of experience of working with children.
- Look at any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently and explore the reasons for this.
- Seek examples of the candidate's previous experience.
- Ascertain the candidate's understanding of the school's mission and ethos.
- Job specific tasks may also form part of the interview process, in addition to the formal Q&A.
- Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed 6 months after the interview date.

### **3.5. After the interview**

After the interview process has been completed, the recruitment panel will:

- Assess all candidates' performance using the same agreed criteria.
- Notify the unsuccessful candidates, providing verbal feedback if requested. Feedback will be on evidence of their performance against the person specification for the role.
- Make a conditional offer of employment to the candidate, initially by phone and followed up by email. With a formal offer of employment letter to follow from HR.
- Assess the successful candidate's self-declaration form. Any spent or filtered convictions declared on the candidate's self-declaration form, or declared at interview, will not affect the offer of employment if already made; however, the school will undertake the relevant assessments to determine whether the candidate is suitable to work in the school.
- File interview notes and assessment materials.

## **4. Pre-appointment vetting checks and offer conditions**

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St Edward's carries out pre-employment checks as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. All offers of employment are conditional upon the satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. These checks seek to identify whether there is anything that would make the candidate unsuitable for working with children and include:

- Verifying the candidate's identity.
- Obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate which includes barred list information for those engaging in regulated activity.
- Obtaining a separate barred list check if the candidate will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate or result is available.
- Verifying the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Verifying of the person's right to work in the UK (i.e. UK Passport, Birth Certificate & P45/P60 or visa documentation).
- Verifying professional qualifications deemed as a requirement for the post.
- Ensuring they are not subject to a prohibition order or any other sanction or restriction is imposed.
- Carrying out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK.
- The receipt of at least two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which are considered to be satisfactory.
- Further references from previous employment working with children.

- Section 128 check for those taking part in the management of the school (including middle management).

The recruitment panel will assess all cases fairly and on an individual basis. Where a decision has been made not to appoint somebody due to unsatisfactory safer-recruitment checks, evidence will be clearly documented.

The school will consider the following when assessing any disclosure information on a DBS certificate:

- The seriousness and relevance to the post which they have applied to.
- How long ago the offence occurred.
- The country where the offence occurred.
- Whether it was a one-off incident or a history of incidents.
- The circumstances around and at the time of the incident.
- Whether the individual accepted responsibility for what happened.
- Whether the offence has been decriminalised.

If the school has reason to believe that an individual is barred, it is an offence for the school to allow the individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

## **5. References**

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- A minimum of two references will be requested.
- References will always be requested directly from the referee and from a senior person with appropriate authority, where possible.
- The school reserves the right to approach any previous childcare employer.
- A character reference may be sought in addition to employment references if deemed necessary.
- The school's standard request form will always be used to obtain references.
- All referees will be asked whether they are satisfied about the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people.
- Any concerns raised from the receipt of the references will be explored further with the referee (where appropriate) and discussed with the candidate.
- Open references, testimonials, and unverified information provided by the candidate as part of the application process, will not be relied upon.
- References will be checked upon receipt to ensure that all questions have been answered satisfactorily and that information is not contradictory or incomplete.
- References will be compared for consistency with the information on the candidate's application form. Discrepancies between the reference and the application form will be discussed with the candidate.
- Electronic references will be checked to ensure that they originate from a legitimate source.
- All references are to be verified with the person who provided the reference.

## **6. Candidates who have lived outside the UK**

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For candidates who have lived outside the UK, all mandatory checks outlined in this policy will be carried out, along with additional checks where necessary, including an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information for those engaging in regulated activity, even if they have never been to the UK before.

The school will make any further checks that it deems appropriate so that any relevant events occurring outside the UK can be considered, e.g. obtaining proof of past teaching conduct for any candidate for a teaching position from the professional regulating authority in the country in which they worked, where available.

## **7. Agency and third-party staff**

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In the case of any employee working at the school who is sourced from an agency or third-party organisation, the school will obtain written confirmation from the organisation that they have carried out safer-recruitment checks.

Photo ID will be checked to ensure the individual who presents for work is the same person on whom all checks have been completed. A copy of photo ID will generally be kept where appropriate.

## **8. Contractors**

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The school will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, 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 will a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

If a contractor is self-employed, the school will 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 will always check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival.

## **9. Single Central Record (SCR)**

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In addition to the individual personnel files, a Single Central Record of recruitment and vetting checks is maintained. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the HR Manager. The SCR contains details of:

- All staff (including supply staff) who work at the school.
- All others who work in regular contact with children in the school, including volunteers.
- All members of the Board of Governors.

The SCR includes checks on:

- Identity.
- Professional qualifications.
- DBS Children's Barred List.
- Prohibition from teaching.
- Section 128.
- Enhanced DBS.
- Right to work in the UK.
- Overseas.
- Fitness to work.
- Online search.



In addition to the above, the SCR also details whether there were any gaps in employment on application and details the receipt of two references, commencing 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. Prior to this date, it detailed the receipt of the most recent employer's reference.

For agency staff, the school will include confirmation that an assurance document has been received from the agency, to confirm the relevant safer-recruitment checks have been completed.

Details of individuals will be removed from the SCR once their employment with the school ends.

## **10. Safer recruitment training**

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At least one member of the recruitment panel will have completed formal safer recruitment training. As a measure of good practice, the school will ensure that this training is renewed every three years.

Staff and governors involved in the recruitment process will have an awareness of information regarding the following:

- The recruitment and selection process.
- Pre-appointment and vetting checks, regulated activity and recording of information.
- Other checks that may be necessary for staff, volunteers and others.
- How to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of children and legal reporting duties on employers.

## **11. Post-recruitment**

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Management and supervision must always be alert to indicators that the employee is unsuitable.

The safeguarding aspects of induction will ensure that all new employees can identify the Designated Safeguarding Leads, their responsibilities and how to contact them. In particular, the procedure for reporting welfare concerns will be explained on the first day of employment.

This review: GM/SW/SH/AH July 2023

Approved by the Board: July 2023