

Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures

July 2024

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1. Introduction

King's College School ("the School") is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its pupils and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. As an employer, the School expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The School is also committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment to all its members of staff. The School recognises that in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit, and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment.

The aims of the School's *Safer Recruitment Policy* are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all job candidates are considered equally, consistently and without bias in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the listed protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2024) (KCSIE), *Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006* (DUCA), the *Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* (the **Prevent Duty Guidance**), the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act* (specially section 7(1)(a)) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- to ensure that the School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

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

2. Recruitment and Selection Procedure

All candidates for employment are required to complete the School's own application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the candidate for completion where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed. Should there be any gaps in academic or employment history, a satisfactory explanation must be provided. A CV will not be accepted in place of the completed application form.

Candidates receive a comprehensive job description which includes a person specification for the role applied for. The job description should accurately reflect the duties of the post. Care should be taken when writing the person specification to ensure that the criteria used specifies all the requirements of the job and does not indirectly discriminate against certain groups of candidates.

Application forms and job descriptions, as well as the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and this policy, are available to download from the School's website and can be forwarded to candidates on request.

Candidates are asked to provide equal opportunity details when making their application to enable a robust means of monitoring the success of our recruitment in relation to our equality, diversity and

inclusion aims. This information is separate from the job application and candidates are not required to provide these details if they do not wish to.

Advertising

In all advertising the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is made clear. The School's application form includes a statement that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity with children (where the role involved this type of activity). Additionally, it is made clear whether the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. See further information below.

The recruitment process is a key marketing exercise, and the process should enhance the reputation of the School. Vacancies will usually be advertised internally and / or externally, as deemed appropriate. It is the School's decision whether a particular vacancy will be advertised; the School will choose which publications and time frame are appropriate for the role in order to reach the widest pool of candidates possible. Additionally, vacancies may be posted on the School's website.

Longlisting and Shortlisting

Any longlisting and / or shortlisting of candidates for the role is carried out by a minimum of two people to reduce the possibility of any bias. Only the Head or School Bursar see the complete application forms; these are redacted for those staff involved in the longlisting / shortlisting process.

The School will conduct a shortlisting exercise by reviewing all application forms to determine which candidates will be invited for a formal interview during which their skills and experience will be discussed in more detail. All shortlisted candidates will be questioned at interview about their suitability to work with children. Additionally, shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a self-declaration form prior to interview on which they will be asked to provide information about their criminal records history and other factors relevant to their suitability to work with children. This information will remain confidential and will only be viewed after the successful candidate has been chosen and an offer has been made.

As per guidance from KCSIE, the School will conduct online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of our safer recruitment due diligence. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened which we may want to explore further at interview. Searches will be carried out by a member of staff not directly involved in the decision-making process and will encompass only publicly available sources such as a website or social media platform.

Shortlisted candidates are provided with details of the interview process (including any required tests) in writing, giving as much prior notice as possible before the interview. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, candidates are also asked to advise the School if there are any particular arrangements or reasonable adjustments that could be made so that they are able to fully participate in the selection process.

All candidates are assessed objectively against the selection criteria set out in the person specification.

References

References will be taken up prior to interview, where possible, and with the candidate's consent.

The School will not ask questions about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made. Candidates will be informed that references will be taken up before interview and they are given the opportunity to discuss this with the School if they do not wish a referee to be contacted at this stage.

All candidates will be required to submit the details of three referees who are considered satisfactory by the School. One of the referees must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer. If the most recent employment did not involve work with children, then another referee should be from the employer with whom the candidate most recently worked with children. Referees should not be relatives or known to the candidate solely as friends.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the candidate is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the candidate is unsuitable to work with children. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the candidate has not been radicalised as far as they are aware so that they do not support terrorism or any form of extremism. All referees will be sent a copy of the job description and person specification for the role for which the candidate has applied. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:

- the candidate's dates of employment, salary, job title and duties, reason for leaving, if applicable, and performance and disciplinary record; and
- whether the candidate has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures, or allegations or concerns, involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired), except where the issues were deemed to have resulted from allegations which were found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

References must be supplied on the School's own form which should be received directly from the referee; the School will not rely solely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate or open references or testimonials.

The School will compare all references with any information given on the application form. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies in the information will be taken up with the candidate and the relevant referee before any appointment is confirmed.

Where a reference is not received prior to interview it will be reviewed upon receipt. Any discrepancies identified between the reference and application form and / or the interview assessment form will be considered by the School. The candidate may be asked to provide further information or clarification before an appointment can be confirmed.

The School may, at its discretion, make telephone contact with any referee to verify the details of the written reference provided.

All internal candidates who apply for a contractual change of role at the School will have their application assessed in accordance with this procedure. References will be taken up for all internal candidates, where relevant, as part of the application process but can be provided by colleagues as the School will be the most recent employer.

Interview, Appointment and Induction

The interview will be carried out by a minimum of two people, one of whom should be the direct line manager and one of whom must have completed safer recruitment training. The School will ensure that the members of the interview panel are as diverse a group as possible by background and experience to minimise the risk of any bias and to encourage a broad range of views in the selection process.

The structure of the interview and interview questions should be consistently applied to all candidates and should be based on the person specification.

Interviewers should take notes during the interview so that they may refer back to these when assessing candidates and during the decision-making process. Notes taken should be objective and

professional. These notes are retained by the School for successful candidates; notes are normally confidentially destroyed after six months for unsuccessful candidates according to the School's *Data Protection and Retention Policy*.

The School may make a verbal offer shortly after the selection process; this will be followed by a written offer of employment and will be subject to the pre-employment checks and agreements detailed below.

Once the successful candidate has received and accepted the offer of employment, the School will arrange an induction programme relevant to the position and following the School's *New Staff Induction Checklist*.

3. Pre-Employment Checks

Following the formal interview, offers of employment will be conditional on the following pre-employment checks and agreements:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the School's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- verification of the candidate's identity (if not already verified) and right to work in the UK;
- verification of qualifications, whether professional or otherwise, which the School takes into account in making the appointment decision, or which are referred to in the application form whether a requirement for the role or not;
- verification of the candidate's employment history;
- the receipt of three references (one of which must be from the candidate's most recent employer) which the School considers to be satisfactory;
- for positions which involve teaching work, information about whether the candidate has ever been referred to, or is the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) which renders them unable or unsuitable to work at the School;
- for candidates who have carried out teaching work outside the UK, information about whether the candidate has ever been referred to, or is the subject of a sanction issued by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other country which renders them unable or unsuitable to work at the School;
- any further checks which the School decides are necessary as a result of the candidate having lived or worked outside of the UK which may include an overseas criminal records check, certificate of good conduct or professional references;
- the receipt of an enhanced DBS certificate and check of the Children's Barred List, required for all members of staff and Governors, which the School considers to be satisfactory;
- information about whether the candidate has ever been subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which renders them unable or unsuitable to work at the School;

- for management positions, information about whether the candidate has ever been referred to the Department for Education, or is the subject of a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, which renders them unable or unsuitable to be part of the management of a School;
- confirmation that the candidate for a management position is not disqualified from acting as a trustee / governor or senior manager of a charity under the Charities Act 2011;
- confirmation that the candidate is not disqualified from working in connection with early or later years provision under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006;
- verification of the candidate's medical fitness for the role (see section 4 below).

The School may, at its discretion, withdraw any offer of employment or cease or terminate an appointment should it not be satisfied with the outcome of any of the above checks.

4. Medical Fitness

The School is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed. This verification is done after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed.

Successful candidates will be required to sign a declaration of medical fitness confirming that there are no reasons, on grounds of mental or physical health, why they should not be able to discharge the responsibilities required by the role. The School may agree to the candidate attending an occupational health assessment to consider their fitness for the role instead. The School also requires a medical questionnaire to be completed which is kept by the School Nurse in a sealed envelope.

The School is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the candidate, obtaining medical evidence, considering reasonable adjustments and suitable alternative employment.

5. DBS Certificates and DBS Update Service

The School requires and will arrange for an enhanced DBS check on all employees. The certificate of the completed check will be sent directly to the candidate who must arrange for the original to be seen by the School prior to beginning employment, where possible. Employment will remain conditional upon the original certificate being provided and it being considered satisfactory by the School.

Should there be a delay in receiving the certificate the School, at its discretion, may allow an employee to begin work subject to a comprehensive risk assessment.

The School, at its discretion, may accept checks of the DBS Update Service in lieu of a new enhanced check should the individual be continuing employment in a similar role. Consent must be given by the candidate prior to the School embarking on a check of the DBS Update Service.

6. Overseas Checks

Candidates who have lived and worked overseas for a substantial period of time in the previous ten years may be asked to provide further information including a criminal records check from the relevant jurisdiction(s), a certificate of good conduct and / or references from any employment held.

7. Supply and Agency Staff

Supply staff engaged by the School or agencies who supply staff to 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 supply or agency-supplied employees can commence work at the School.

The School will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by an agency and will require the provision of the original DBS disclosure certificate before supply or agency staff can commence work at the School.

8. Volunteers

The School may require an enhanced DBS and Children's Barred List check on volunteers depending on the nature of their duties and the amount of supervision they will receive by a member of staff.

Under no circumstances will the School permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

9. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of a previous conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions based on merit and ability. If a candidate has a criminal record this will not automatically bar them from employment with the School. Each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with an objective assessment criteria including, but not limited to, the circumstances and seriousness of the offence, the relevance to the position applied for and the length of time since the offence occurred.

All positions within the School are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All candidates must therefore declare all previous convictions and cautions, including those which would normally be considered "spent" except those received for an offence committed in the United Kingdom if it has been filtered in accordance with the DBS filtering rules.

A failure to disclose a previous conviction (which should have been declared) may lead to an application being rejected or, if the failure to disclose is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. A failure to disclose a previous conviction may also amount to a criminal offence.

It is unlawful for the School to knowingly employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at the School. The School will make a report to the Police and / or the DBS if:

- it receives an application from a barred person;
- it is provided with false information in, or in support of a candidate's application; or
- it has serious concerns about a candidate's suitability to work with children.

10. Retention of Records / Single Central Register

The School is legally required to undertake the pre-employment checks detailed above and records that the checks have been undertaken on the School's Single Central Register which is only visible to the Head and the Head's Personal Assistant.

The School will retain certain information provided as part of the recruitment process for successful candidates. This may include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. This documentation will be retained by the School throughout the

duration of the candidate's employment with the School; it will be retained for a further period of seven years after employment terminates after which it will be securely destroyed.

If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will be confidentially destroyed after six months.

11. Whistleblowing

All staff are expected and encouraged to raise concerns they have, whether related to the safeguarding and welfare of pupils, the conduct of staff or other matters, during the course of their employment in accordance with the School's policies (including the *Whistleblowing Policy*, the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and the *Staff Code of Conduct*). Safeguarding children is at the centre of the School's culture and is considered formally during staff appraisal reviews and at exit interviews which are held with all leavers.

Should a candidate have concerns during the recruitment process that relate to the conduct of staff or safeguarding, they should raise these with the Head or School Bursar.

12. Referrals to the DBS and Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

The School has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at the School despite being barred from working with children; and / or
- has been removed by the School from working in 'regulated activity' (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the School may also decide to make a referral to the TRA.

13. Monitoring and Review

Recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that the School attracts the best candidates on the basis of their merits and abilities without bias and maintains its commitment to the highest standard of safeguarding of pupils.

14. Version Control

Date of last review	July 2024
Date of next review	July 2025
Policy owner	Senior Leadership Team
Authorisation	Rev Dr Stephen Cherry, Chair of Governors on behalf of the Board of Governors