



Solefield School

RECRUITMENT POLICY

1 Introduction

Solefield School, Sevenoaks (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.

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 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 applicants are considered equitably and consistently
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age
- to ensure compliance with all relevant recommendations and guidance including the recommendations of the Department for Education (DFE) *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)* and the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- 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 & selection procedure

The Headmistress and other key staff are trained in Safer Recruitment in Education and a Safer Recruitment Checklist is followed for all interviews. All applicants for employment will be required to complete an **application form** containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. 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. Please note that the School may carry out online searches on applicants as part of the shortlisting exercise, as part of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Online searches will not be carried out candidates that are not shortlisted for the role.

Applicants will receive a job description and person specification for the role applied for.

The applicant may then be invited to attend a **formal interview** at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail, along with their attitude towards children and safeguarding. The candidate's identity will be checked at the interview stage.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the **formal interview**, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the School's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- the receipt of two satisfactory references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the School considers to be satisfactory;
- the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the School considers to be satisfactory, which confirms the applicant is not barred from working with children;
- overseas criminal record checks, if appropriate;
- For appropriate roles, satisfactory section 128 (prohibition from management of an independent school) and section 142 checks;
- in the case of teaching staff, confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online service.
- for appropriate roles – confirmation from the applicant that he/she is not disqualified from providing childcare with early or later years provision or from being directly involved in its management pursuant to the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 and Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018;
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role, with reference to the School's medical adviser, if required. The school will not ask health related questions before an offer of employment is made unless they specifically relate to the nature of the work;
- verification of qualifications and identity;
- confirmation of the right to work in the UK;
- such other employment checks as the school is required to complete in accordance with its statutory or regulatory obligations;

The School is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the school, **before** an appointment can be confirmed.

The successful applicant must complete a pre-employment health questionnaire. The information contained in the questionnaire will not form part of the selection process. The School will arrange for the information contained in the questionnaire to be reviewed by the School's medical advisor, if necessary. This information

will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e. proposed timetable, extra-curricular activities, layout of the School. If the School's medical advisor has any doubts about an applicant's fitness the School will seek a further medical opinion from a specialist or request that the applicant undertakes a full medical assessment.

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

If there is a delay in receiving a Disclosure and Barring Service certificate the Head has discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the DBS Disclosure but appropriate supervision will be put in place and this will only be allowed if all other checks, including a DBS Children's Barred List First Result have been completed. A risk assessment will also be carried out and reviewed every 14 days if required.

3 Pre-employment checks

In accordance with the recommendations of the DCSF in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* the School carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

3.1 Verification of identity for interview

All applicants who are invited to an Interview will be required to bring proof of identity: either a passport or Driving Licence photo card.

3.2 Verification of identity and address

All applicants who are offered a position will be required to bring the following evidence of identity, right to work in the UK, address and qualifications:

- passport; and
- Driving licence or birth certificate; and
- one utility bill, bank statement or approved document showing their name and home address; and
- documentation confirming their National Insurance Number (P45, P60 or National Insurance Card); and
- original documents confirming any relevant educational and professional qualifications referred to in their application form

Where an applicant claims to have 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.

The School asks for the date of birth of all applicants (and proof of this) in accordance with the Department for Education (DFE) *Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)*. Proof of date of birth is necessary so that the School may verify the identity of, and check for any unexplained discrepancies in the employment and education history of all applicants. The school will check any gaps in employment and record that the reasons for any gaps are satisfactory. Evidence of relevant qualifications is also required along with evidence of the right to work in the UK if applicable. The School does not discriminate against applicants on the grounds of age.

3.3 References

Applicants will be told that any previous employer may be contacted during the selection process. All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the School. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second referee should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. References may be followed up and verified by a telephone call. If a reference is taken over the telephone, detailed notes should be taken, dated and signed. Neither referee should be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend.

- All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children, or has had any known link to extremist activity. All referees will be sent a copy of the job description and person specification for the role which the applicant has applied for. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:
- the applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance, sickness and disciplinary record
- whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired)
- whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people
- Whether there have been concerns that the candidate has been or is involved in 'extremism'

The School will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or on 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 applicant and the relevant referee before any appointment is confirmed.

The school confirms all references by telephone verification.

3.4 Disclosure and Barring Service checks

Due to the nature of the work, the School applies for an enhanced disclosure certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**) in respect of all staff members, governors, volunteers and club takers within three months prior to their start date.

For all positions, the School requests an enhanced disclosure from the DBS. An enhanced disclosure will contain details of all convictions on record (including those which are defined as "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) together with details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings held on the Police National Computer. An enhanced disclosure will also reveal whether an applicant is barred from working with children by virtue of his/her inclusion on the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service. An enhanced disclosure may also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the matter in question.

Overseas criminal checks will be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence. These applicants may also be asked to provide further information, including the equivalent of a disclosure, if one is available in the relevant jurisdiction(s).

The School expects supply/temporary worker agencies/contractors that are used by the School to register with the DBS on their own account and to provide written confirmation that all relevant checks have been carried out in respect of staff supplied to the School. Proof of registration will be required before the School will commission services from any such organisation. The School will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by such an agency / contractor.

All such checks will be completed before an appointment can be confirmed.

4 Policy on recruitment of ex-offenders

4.1 Background

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions on the basis of 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 in paragraph 4.2 below.

All positions within the School are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants must therefore declare all previous convictions and cautions, including those which would normally be considered "spent" except for those to which the DBS filtering rules apply. A failure to disclose a previous conviction (which should be 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.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to 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 attempt to apply for a position at the School. The School will make a report to the police and/or the DBS if:

- the School receives an application from a barred person; or
- 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,

4.2 Assessment criteria

In the event that 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(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the School's normal 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
 - serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

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

4.3 Assessment procedure

In the event that 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 assessment form must be signed by the Headmistress of the School 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 direct. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the School will, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

4.4 Retention and security of disclosure information

The School's policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the use of disclosure information, but it is under no obligation to do so.

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 Headmistress, the Headmistress' PA and the DSL.
- not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary and for a maximum of 6 months. 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
 - prohibit the photocopying or scanning of any disclosure information

The School complies with the provisions of the DBS code of practice, a copy of which is available on request.

5 Retention of records

The School is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the School will retain on his / her personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process (with the exception of disclosure information or any associated correspondence as mentioned above). This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the School to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that the School may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by the School for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the School (with the exception of disclosure information or any associated correspondence as mentioned above). It will be retained for a period of six months after employment terminates after which it will be securely destroyed.

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

6 Referrals to the DBS and Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks the School also 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; 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.

7 Queries

If an applicant has any queries on how to complete the application form or any other matter they should contact the Headmistress.

This procedure is applicable to all parts of the school including the EYFS (Little Acorns and Reception classes).

Helen McClure
Updated 22.09.24
Review 1.09.25

Solefield School
Safer Recruitment checklist

The following checklist is followed for all interviews at Solefield.

Staff trained in Safer Recruitment:

Fiona Henry (HR Manager)
Helen McClure (Head)
Kate Easton (Deputy Head)
Robert Coston (Deputy Head H&S)
Gemma Goodwin (Head of Pre-Prep)
Luke Budden (Assistant Head)
Lisa Glennon-Cousins (SENCO)
Rachael Adams (EYFS Lead)

Helen McClure September 2024

Review: September 2025

Activity	Currently in place Yes/No
Ensure job descriptions, person specifications and application forms are clear, use plain English where possible and reflect the requirements of the role and the organisation's commitment to safeguarding.	Y
If the role requires the person to work in regulated activity, include a statement in job adverts that it is a criminal offence for people who are barred from working in regulated activity to apply for roles that require them to work unsupervised with that particular group (i.e. adults at risk, children or both).	Y
Send candidates information about the values of the organisation and the associated expected behaviours.	Y
Send candidate's information on the level of criminal record check required and at what point in the recruitment process disclosure is required.	Y
Identify and train all staff involved in the selection process.	Y
Ensure that at least two people are involved in shortlisting applications and use agreed criteria and identify any gaps.	Y
Develop clear interview questions and selection tools.	Y
Ask shortlisted candidates to complete a criminal record self-declaration stating any cautions and/or convictions appropriate for the role applied for, in-line with ROA 1974 or ROA Exceptions Order (as amended in 2013).	Y

Apply for the appropriate level of criminal record check after a conditional job offer has been made.	Y
Check the identification and right to work documents and qualifications, if relevant, of every applicant. Only accept originals.	Y
Take up all available references on short-listed applicants. Check for gaps and any inconsistencies between information given on the application form, and that provided by the references. Telephone to confirm reference receipt and follow up any queries.	Y
Carry out a risk assessment on an applicant, if concerns arise from criminal record or allegation information contained on a criminal record certificate. Store a copy of the risk assessment, which should include any recommended safeguards to minimise risk, securely together with copy of the self-declaration and the certificate in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/ Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 requirements.	Y
Make all appointments subject to a probationary period.	Y
Highlight safeguarding responsibilities and set clear expectations of acceptable behaviour and boundaries of their role during staff induction.	Y
Ensure staff have the relevant induction and training required to be safe and effective in their role	Y
Carry out regular one-to-one supervision meetings with staff and focus on their attitudes, values and behaviours as well as what they do.	Y
Ensure a culture of vigilance and have clear policies and procedures in place which explain what staff, and others, should do if they have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff.	Y
Respond quickly and appropriately to any allegations about the behaviour of a member of staff, in particular concerning behaviour towards a child or adult at risk.	Y

Helen McClure
Headmistress
Updated 01.09.23
Review 01.09.24