

THAKEHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Small School, Big Opportunities, Great Achievements'



Safer Recruiting Policy

Thakeham Primary School

Date approved by Full Governing Body: 28.09.20

Review Date: December 2023

Signed

Headteacher: *S. Norton*

Chair of Governors: *Judith James*

Aim

To ensure our recruitment practices help deter, reject or identify people who might pose a risk to children. This document must be read alongside 'Guidance on completing pre-employment checks' which is available on WSSfS.

Scope

This policy should be read and understood by all those that are involved in the recruitment or selection process, **before** any recruitment activity commences. Organisations that provide the school with agency workers or provide services on our behalf **must** have practices that are consistent with this Policy.

Who can help?

- DBSmailbox@westsussex.gov.uk 01243 642148 – Please contact the DBS team if you need any help in relation to the DBS.
- Professional.Support@westsussex.gov.uk 033022 22422 – Please contact HR Professional Support for questions in relation to pre-employment checks.
- **Safeguarding Lead** – Please contact the Local Authority's Safeguarding Team if you have any safeguarding concerns or questions.

1.0 Principles

As a school it is essential that we do all that we can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our pupils. One important aspect of this is the implementation of Safer Recruitment Practices.

Having effective safer recruitment practices will help:

- Deter applicants with inappropriate motivations as they will not see the school as a 'soft target' and they will not see opportunities to abuse.
- Detect inappropriate behaviour at the earliest opportunity and respond decisively by rejecting the applicant.
- Prevent opportunities for abuse by proactively managing the environment, assessing risk and creating clear expectations of standards of behaviour.

2.0 Provisions

This section covers Safer Recruitment provisions that **must** be implemented.

2.1 General

- We will ensure compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.

2.2 Training

- A minimum of one person on a recruitment panel **must** have completed Safer Recruitment Training. The training will cover, at a minimum, the content of the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.

2.3 Role Profiles/ Person Specification

- Role Profiles/Person Specifications **must** include a statement illustrating that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is an essential requirement of the role.

Example:

You are required:

- *To safeguard and promote the welfare of all children*
- *To understand and follow our safeguarding policies and procedures*
- *To appropriately raise any issues of concern in order to protect children*

2.4 Job advertisements

- Job advertisements **must** include a statement illustrating our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. A statement explaining that for **all** roles that meet 'Regulated Activity' the successful candidate will be required to undertake an enhanced [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#) with Barred Lists check before employment commences.
- A statement explaining that for eligible roles that involve working with children under the age of 5 or 5-8 year olds outside of school hours, the successful candidate would be required to sign a declaration form declaring they are not disqualified from undertaking this work under the "[Childcare \(Disqualification\) Regulations 2009](#)".

2.5 Application process

An application form must be completed in full by all those that are interested in the vacancy.

Application forms will be used to enable all potential applicants to provide a common set of core data as follows:

- Name, address, National Insurance number and confirmation of right to work in the UK
- Full details of qualifications relevant to the position applied for including awarding body and date of award
- Full history in chronological order showing employment, study, voluntary work, with explanations for any periods not covered, and reasons for leaving employment.
- Details of referees
- A statement from the applicant of their personal qualities and experience, which they believe, meets the person specification.

Please note: If someone does not currently have the right to work in the UK, it should not rule them out from applying or being shortlisted. In certain circumstances the individual can either obtain right to work at a later stage of the recruitment process or some schools may be authorised to sponsor the individual to work in the UK. Please be aware that legislation surrounding sponsorship is extremely complex and there is no guarantee that UK Visas and Immigration will agree to the request. For further information please refer to [Sponsoring a Migrant Worker](#).

For further information on shortlisting please refer to the [Selecting Candidates](#) document.

Please note: The DBS code of practice and the Data Protection Act makes it clear that employers should not ask for information at an earlier stage in the recruitment process than necessary. To comply with this, **only** shortlisted or appointable candidates are asked to disclose details of any criminal record they may have at the time they are invited to interview. This should be done using the “Shortlisted Candidate Information form”

2.6 References

- References must be requested for all applicants invited for interview and must be returned and scrutinised prior to interview.
- Only where an applicant has not given consent for a reference to be obtained from their current employer prior to interview, will a reference be requested after interview for the preferred candidate.
- All references received by the school at this stage must be signed or countersigned by the Headteacher if the last employment was in a school. These will be scrutinised to identify any gaps or contradictions, which will **then be explored at interview**.

References for external appointments must:

- Be a minimum of 2 references;
- Cover a minimum 5-year period;
- Include their last employer where they worked in a school.
- References must be independently verified, by:
 - Telephoning the author to confirm they provided the reference;
 - Checking the existence of the employer/school (phone book or internet search).
- All references received must illustrate reasons for leaving

2.7 Shortlisted Candidate Information Form

- Applicants invited to interview must complete the Shortlisted Candidate Information Form prior to interview and bring along to interview. Where required, content contained on the form will be discussed by the applicant and the chair at interview.
- There is a statement on this form explaining that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, requiring a signed statement that the individual is not disqualified from work with children or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, and either has no sanctions, cautions or bind-overs, or has attached details of their record in a sealed envelope marked

confidential. There will also be an explanation of the DBS checking requirements.

2.8 Interview

- Recruiters are responsible for carefully scrutinising Application Forms, Shortlisted Candidate Information Forms and References in order to identify any anomalies, employment gaps or safeguarding concern, which will then be discussed and understood at interview.
- The Interview Panel must ask questions that cover safeguarding. For example questions see appendix A.
- The panel should then explore any anomalies or gaps in employment history which have been identified so far, in order to satisfy themselves that the individual meets the safeguarding criteria.
- **Please Note:** You must **not** ask questions about health or disability at the interview stage. This can only be explored after a job offer has been made during the pre-employment checking stage (see 8.0).
- All interviews will be on a face to face basis (wherever possible, in Covid-19 conditions these may be undertaken remotely or outside, socially distanced), and the same panel will see all candidates and complete the appropriate pre-employment checks.
- The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore whether the chosen applicant can meet the essential criteria.
- It is recommended that only after a full assessment of the applicant has been completed and a decision made as to their ability to do the job should any criminal conviction and associated information be discussed. This will ensure that applicants who have a criminal record are not being discriminated against or treated unfairly. Consideration including discussion with the candidate will need to be given to any information regarding previous records of cautions or convictions including any information provided in a sealed envelope alongside the Shortlisted Candidate Information form.
- The interview provides an opportunity to raise issues concerning offences with applicants in an open discussion and as part of a structured and carefully managed process. Obviously all information should remain confidential to the interview panel and be treated with sensitivity and tact. It is recommended that any such discussion takes place between the chair of the interview panel and the candidate. (For Headteacher appointments, this will be between the Local Authority Officer supporting the recruitment process and the candidate).

2.9 Pre- Employment Checks

Completing robust pre- employment checks on potential employees and volunteers is a vital part of the safer recruitment process. The successful candidate must not commence employment prior to the completion of satisfactory pre-employment checks. This includes checking:

- References o Shortlisted Candidate Information Form
- Qualifications and membership to a Professional Body
- Right to Work in the UK
- A Medical or A DBS
- Any overseas checks (where applicable) for example a Certificate of Good Conduct Prohibited Teacher Status check (where applicable)

- Qualified Teacher Status Check (where applicable)
- Section 128 check (where applicable)

For information on all pre-employment checks, how to complete them and when they are appropriate please refer to the document Pre Employment checking on WSSfS.

2.10 DBS Referrals

A referral to the DBS **must** be made if, during their employment, an employee has:

- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant offence (a plain English explanation of relevant offences can be found on the [DBS website](#));
- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children i.e. an action or inaction (neglect) that has harmed a child or put them at risk of harm; or
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children i.e. there has been no relevant conduct but a risk of harm to a child still exists.

In these circumstances, Headteachers should liaise with the HR Professional Support Team and the Local Authority Designated Officer to ensure a referral is made. In most cases this will be following a dismissal but will also be required if an employee may or would have been dismissed had they not resigned first.

2.11 Overseas Criminal Record Check

- If the successful applicant has lived or worked overseas in the last 5 years, they must obtain a certificate of good conduct or appropriate criminal records information for their time that has been spent overseas, where possible.
- For those that lived or worked overseas more than 5 years ago, the decision is with the school as to whether this is required.
- Where a certificate of good conduct contains information, the positive disclosure process must be followed.

2.12 Induction

- All members of staff will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including child protection, and make clear the expectations and codes of conduct which will govern how staff carry out their roles. This will give the opportunity to provide discussion of any relevant issues. The programme will ensure that all new staff are aware of the following policies and procedures and how to access them (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Safeguarding and welfare e.g. child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, anti-discrimination, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, internet safety
 - Code of Conduct, Discipline and grievance, capability and whistle-blowing.
 - Raising a concern and the Confidential Reporting Policy
 - Training – child protection, FGM, Prevent, Health & Safety, read KCSiE part 1

2.13 On-going Employment

The school recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff.

We will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through Performance management. We will also provide a range of opportunities where concerns can be raised, in order that staff feel that the school culture embraces safeguarding and communicates a clear framework to employees, parents and pupils. We will monitor issues as they arise, and through the use of such strategies as exit interviews will seek to continually improve the school environment, for the benefit of both staff and pupils.

2.14 Convictions during employment

- Once an appointment has been confirmed, there is a contractual requirement for the person appointed to disclose any offence committed during their employment. An employee convicted of a crime, or who receives a police caution, whilst in employment should advise his/her Headteacher in the first instance. The Headteacher should then contact the [HR Professional Support Team](#) for advice.
- Consideration would be given as to whether the employee should remain in post, taking into account whether the conviction is relevant to the post. It is important that no decision on terminating the employment contract is taken until advice has been sought from HR Professional Support.
- Where an employee is convicted of a crime, or receives a police caution, but fails to advise his/her line manager, it will be viewed as a breach of contract and could result in disciplinary action, including potential dismissal.

2.15 Secretary of State Referral

- Where a teacher, including an agency, is dismissed or a school ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or might have dismissed them or ceased to use their services had they not left first, they must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by the Education Act 2002. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teacher-misconduct-referring-a-case>

Appendix 1 Example safeguarding questions

Area	Example Questions	Positive Indicators	Negative Indicators
Motivations for working with children (Self-awareness/ knowledge and understanding of self, interconnection between self and professional role)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you feel are the main drivers that led you to want to work with children? • How do you motivate young people? • What has working with young people, to date, taught you about yourself? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convincing responses based on balanced understanding of self and circumstance. • Has a realistic knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses. • Examples of having considered/tried other options and alternatives. • A realistic appreciation of the challenges involved in working with children. • Evidence of others having supported and encouraged based on observation of personal talent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconvincing responses based on whimsical examples. Not self-aware, don't see themselves as others do. • Driven by personal needs not needs of others. • Not realistic about personal strengths and weaknesses. • Unrealistic impression of what working with children is really like. • Failure to consider other alternatives. • Pushed by others, or forced by circumstance, to do something they don't appear to have personally thought through.
Emotional maturity and resilience (Consistency under pressure, ability to use authority and respond appropriately, ability to seek assistance/support where necessary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about a time when you have been working with children and your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? How did you manage the situation? • Tell me about a child you have had particular difficulty dealing with. What made it difficult? How did you manage the situation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaves consistently and appropriately under pressure or in a position of authority. • Has control over emotions with children. • Understands power position and how to seek help in difficult circumstances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate responses when under pressure or when in a position of power. • Inconsistent responses. • Handles conflict badly. • Fails to control temper/emotions with children. • Doesn't seek help when needed. • Fails to go to others for advice.
Values and ethics (Ability to build and sustain professional standards and relationships, ability to understand and respect other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your attitudes to child protection? How have these developed over time? • What are your feelings about children who make allegations against staff? • How do you feel when someone holds an opinion that differs from your 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a balanced understanding of rights and wrongs. • Puts the child first. Alive to the realities of abuse. • Prepared to believe. • Shows a contemplative approach, drawing on personal experiences and lessons from others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme opinions that don't account for the views/feelings of others. • Doesn't show balance in opinion. • Doesn't build on new information or understanding. • Opinions harden/become dogged. • Doesn't show a full or rounded appreciation of safeguarding issues.

<p>people's opinions, ability to contribute towards creating a safe and protective environment).</p>	<p>own? How do you behave in this situation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever had concerns about a colleague? How did you deal with this? • What does 'promoting fundamental British values' mean to you? • Tell us about what you have done in the last 12 months to actually improve child protection in the workplace. How did this action arise? Follow up with: Who did you talk to? What were the results? • What is the safeguarding policy in your workplace? Follow up with: How is it monitored? What steps have you taken to improve things? • Give me an example of when you have had safeguarding concerns about a child. Follow up with: How did it arise? Who did you speak to? What actions did you take? • Tell us about a situation where you felt you fell short of safeguarding standards. Follow up with: How did it arise? Who did you speak to? What actions did you take? • Have you ever had to challenge the views of someone more senior than yourself in relation to safeguarding concerns? Follow up with: What were the circumstances? How did you go about it? What was the outcome? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds values and judgments based on new information. • Shows an appreciation of safeguarding issues and an ability to contribute towards a protective environment. • Shows respect for others' feelings, views and circumstances • Demonstrates a commitment to fundamental British values. • Proactive and has personally taken actions to improve safeguarding culture. • Has personal experience of having appropriately dealt with a challenging safeguarding issue. • Personally, committed towards making improvements. Sees it as part of their job. • Prepared to challenge others in the workplace to make tangible improvements to safeguarding. • Prepared to tackle difficult issues and confront individuals if necessary, in order to promote best practice. • Shows a good understanding of the issues. Up to date with events and legislation. Knows about test cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismissive of, or underplays, the risks. • Consistently puts the blame and responsibility for child/ adult protection elsewhere. • Fails to believe in suspicions/reports of abuse • Dismissive of Fundamental British Values or expresses views that undermine these • No evidence of having taken steps in own right to make improvements. • Passive approach to safeguarding issues. • Reluctance to challenge people / systems / processes to make things better. • No real experience of handling safeguarding issues. Naïve approach. • Sees it as someone else's job and/or responsibility. • Not well versed or clear in understanding of the issues/sensitivities. • Intolerant of the bureaucracy around safeguarding. • Shows a tendency to take inappropriate chances/risks in area of safeguarding.
--	--	--	---

Appendix 2 Safer Recruitment Checklist

Event	Notes	Date Completed
Planning	Timescales Person specification/Job Description including expectation to follow all safeguarding procedures Application Form (state no CVs accepted) Include commitment to safeguarding on all recruitment materials, including website Statement that DBS/other vetting checks will be completed	
Vacancy Advertised		
Applications received	Scrutiny of dates, gaps, discrepancies and link to Person Spec./JDs	
Short-listing	At least two people involved Judged against standard criteria	
References requested	Request directly from appropriate referee, 2 required, school references to be countersigned by Head. Ask specific safeguarding questions	
References received	Scrutinised against information given on application form Note issues of concern to be followed up at interview or with referee	
Invitation to interview sent out	Include full instructions for the day, including request to bring along proof(s) of identity, evidence of qualifications and right to work in UK. For teachers, proof of QTS. (Current DBS if applicable or check DBS Update Service)	
Interview day -	Copies of documents taken and any issues noted	

applicants	and shared with interview panel for clarification. Any lack of documents queried and panel agree whether to interview or not.	
Interview day – panel	Panel must include at least one person who has completed Safer Recruitment training Panel must include people who are authorised to appoint staff Panel to have met prior to interviewing and have discussed the questions and assessment criteria The same people interview every candidate	
Interview	Check any discrepancies in application form/ references/ identity/qualification evidence Check suitability to work with children Explore safeguarding/child protection understanding Record made of questions/answers	
Conditional offer of employment made	Made clear to successful applicant that the offer of employment is conditional on successful vetting and other per-employment checks (eg. medical) (and for non-teaching posts, a probationary period)	
Records of Interview information filed	For unsuccessful candidates - kept from date of appointment of successful candidate plus 6 months (include name of interviewers with safer recruitment training) For successful candidate – placed in personnel file and kept until termination of employment plus 6 years (include name of interviewers with safer recruitment training) Evidence of Right to work in UK – kept until termination of employment plus not less than two years Any copies of DBS Certificates – must not be kept	

	for longer than 6 months Copies of other evidence may be kept on file until termination of employment plus 6 years	
Enhanced DBS form completed online or on paper	For all staff and governors.	
DBS Barred List requested	For staff or governors in regulated activity only.	
Health Form completed and requested		
Prohibition from teaching check completed	Using Teaching Regulation Agency portal	
Disqualification under the Childcare Act check	For all staff working with under-5s; or 5 – 8 year olds out-of-school hours, eg. after-school clubs. Self-declaration	
QTS Check for teachers (May not apply in academies, independent or free schools)	Confirmation of qualified teacher status, including confirmation that where relevant the probationary period has been completed. Confirmation statutory induction completed. Checked via Teaching Regulation Agency portal	
Overseas Checks	Not prohibited or restricted from teaching by another EU country. Completed via Teaching Regulation Agency portal. Police check/Certificate of Good Conduct obtained according to school policy. For overseas trained teachers, letter that NARIC	

	has agreed equivalence of qualification with UK standards	
Single Central Record	All relevant checks recorded on the Single Central Record	
Induction completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and welfare e.g. child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, anti-discrimination, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, internet safety • Code of Conduct, Discipline and grievance, capability and whistle-blowing. • Raising a concern and the Confidential Reporting Policy • Training – child protection, FGM, Prevent, Health & Safety, read KCSiE part 1 	