



Highfield Priory School and Nursery

Safer Recruitment Policy

The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for this policy.

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This policy should be read in conjunction with:
Health and Safety Policy

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in education. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

This school recognises the value of and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities. The school is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the school is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. The school will uphold its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed. This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles set down in the school's Equality Policy.

All posts within school are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure Barring Service).

The school is committed to ensuring people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.

The school will:

- Ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have completed a safer recruitment training course.
- Implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role.
- Keep and maintain a single central record (SCR) of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DFE requirements.
- Ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure. The school will monitor the compliance with these measures.
- Require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the school to notify the school, in writing of the offence and the penalty.

The school will ensure all pre-employment checks are undertaken. A person's employment start date must not be before **ALL** employment checks are completed. There are certain exceptions, but then a *Risk Assessment (Pending DBS)* form should be completed. Refer also section *Commencement of Employment Prior to DBS Certification* below. Completion of the forms within the recruitment process and entry in the SCR will indicate whether each of the recruitment checks listed below are completed or not.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the governing body to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DFE guidance and legal requirements
- Monitor the school's compliance with them

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and other managers involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure

It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers to comply with this document.

It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safe recruitment pre-employment checks.

In accordance with the School Staffing Regulations, the governing body has delegated responsibility to the Headteacher to lead in all appointments outside of the leadership group.

School governors may be involved in staff appointments, but the final decision will rest with the Headteacher. The Headteacher may delegate the selection process of staff outside of the leadership group to other managers in the school but remains responsible for the decision to appoint.

The Procedure

The recruitment process is documented in the schedule *Flowchart for Recruitment and Employment Process*. Each form is given an index reference, commencing with Index Reference A, the form entitled **Recruitment Checklist**. The schedule also contains detail of the section for filing on each individual personnel file.

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, normally this will entail an external advertisement.

However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.

Applications

The form – The school uses a standard application form / covering letter and CV. The school requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview and checked against references.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police and other professional regulatory bodies

Online Searches

As part of the shortlisting process the school will carry out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school will explore with the applicant at interview. The check will be recorded on the SCR.

References

References for shortlisted candidates will be sent for immediately after shortlisting. The reference will be verified by a phone call to the referee.

References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable. The school will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. A reference will be sought from the candidate's current employer and be completed by a senior person with appropriate authority. A reference must be secured from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable. If the referee is school or college based, the reference will be 'confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations.

Reference requests will specifically ask:

About the referee's relationship with the candidate

Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.

Referees will also be asked to confirm details of:

The applicant's current post, salary and attendance record

Performance history and conduct

Any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current

Any disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired and the respective outcomes

Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns

References will be compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant at interview.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and which no further issues have been raised, are not likely to cause concern. More serious or recent concerns or issues are more likely to cause concern. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

Any concerns will be resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants

The school's policy is to require shortlisted applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all criminal convictions whether "spent" or "unspent" and include any cautions and pending prosecution.

Such declarations will be made on an appropriate form and should be submitted in a sealed envelope, marked strictly private and confidential to the chair of the selection panel / Headteacher, prior to the interview. The chair of the panel / Headteacher will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at interview.

Disclosure of any convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

Interviews

The selection process will always include the following:

Face to face interview / professional interview,

If a teaching role, then an activity with children

Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status.

Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents on the day of interview in line with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. Similar information is also required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau check on the preferred candidate. The school will adopt best practice by checking the name on the candidates birth certificate, where this is available.

Short-listed candidates will also be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation on the day of interview. The school will verify that candidates have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the school will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where candidates have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check by NARIC will also be required.

Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the chair of the panel / Headteacher.

Pre-employment Checks

Prior to the commencement of employment, the school will undertake appropriate checks via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to identify any prohibition, sanction or restriction which will prevent a person from fulfilling their role at the school. Overseas checks will be undertaken where applicable and with reference to the Home Office's Guidance.

A list, now maintained by the DfE effective 2021, will identify individuals who have been barred from taking part in the management of an independent school and those who have been barred from working in regulated activities with children and/or vulnerable adults. Teaching and EYFS Staff complete a self-declaration form confirming whether they are not disqualified from childcare under regulation 9 of the 2009 Regulations. The Check A Teacher's Record Service should be used to verify any award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), the completion of teacher induction or probation. It will also be used to check whether the candidate is subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or subject to any disciplinary sanctions imposed by the GTCE(pre-2012).

Medical Checks

Prior to the commencement of employment, the school will request that a Medical Fitness form be filled in to verify that the candidate is physically and mentally able to carry out the duties expected of a member of staff and for the school to consider any reasonable adjustments that could/should be made under the DDA Act 2005.

Commencement of Employment prior to DBS Certification

In unusual circumstances, it is permitted to commence employment prior to receiving a DBS after a Barred List Check has been undertaken and after a risk assessment and procedures have been put in place and been agreed to by the Headmaster.

Employment Offer

It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of DBS disclosures, the checks detailed above must all be completed BEFORE a person's appointment is confirmed. In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The school will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6-month period, after which time the notes will be destroyed (i.e., shredded). The 6-month retention period will allow the school to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to the Employment tribunal.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a subject access request in writing to the chair of the panel / Headteacher within 6 months of the interview date.

Single Central Record (SCR) of Recruitment Vetting Checks

In line with DFE requirements, the school will keep and maintain a SCR of recruitment and vetting checks. It is held in an excel workbook entitled *Single Central Record of Appointments*. It is located on the SharePoint Y:\Staff and Governors. The list will record all staff who are employed at the school, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, governors, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g. specialist sports coach or artist. The workbook also includes a sheet extracted from the ISI Regulations entitled Recruitment Checks September yyyy (where yyyy is the year of the current version of the regulations).

The central record will indicate the date the following checks have been completed:

Enhanced DBS check

Barred list check, for those in regulated activity

Identity checks(Birth Certificate)

Medical fitness check by completion of a *Health Declaration* Form

Employment history (application form)

References (two references must be provided)

Qualifications, where appropriate

Right to work in the UK

Overseas checks (where applicable and with reference to the Home Office's Guidance). (Note an EEA check no longer applies) *

Prohibition from teaching check (where required)

Prohibition from management (where required)

Declaration in Relation to Childcare Disqualification (DRCD)

Online Searches

* For individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK the school will make any further checks that are appropriate, following the guidance of KCSIE.

In order to record supply staff provided through an agency on the record, the school will require written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed the checks described above. The school does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure. However, identity checks must be carried out by the school to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them. A copy of evidence of Right to Work in the UK and any overseas checks where relevant. Will also be retained on the personnel file.

Probation Periods

Newly appointed members of staff who are new to the employment of the governing body will be subject to the school's probationary period.

The school has a specific safeguarding related whistleblowing policy which has been disseminated to all staff and volunteers.

The school adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously.

The school will follow DFE and Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board allegations procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Authority

The Full Board of Governors, by delegation to sub-committees, is responsible for formulating the policies and procedures that will ensure the school continue to achieve the aims of the overall school strategy. Hence, each sub-committee has Terms of Reference and assigned responsibility for policies within that scope. The sub-committees are: Finance and General Purposes Committee, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, Safeguarding Committee, Education Committee and Marketing Committee.