KINGS PARK SCHOOL

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kings Park School is an independent specialist provision, offering support and education for children and young people from ages 7-16 with various individual needs. Each child and young person's support is guided by their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which outlines the provision required to meet their individual needs. With spacious, light-filled classrooms and a highly skilled team of specialist SEN staff, our school provides a calm and supportive environment where children and young people are empowered to move beyond past challenges.

Each learner follows a personalised timetable tailored to their individual needs and interests, with clear, achievable targets that promote motivation, confidence and progress. In addition to the statutory annual review process, we carry out a broad range of formal and informal assessments throughout the year to monitor progress and adapt provision where necessary.

Classes are small with up to 8 pupils, depending on the individual needs. Each class is led by a teacher and supported by a dedicated teaching assistant, with additional teaching assistants provided where necessary and stated on the child's EHCP. Children and young people will be placed in a class based on suitability rather age. Our nurture-based approach ensures that emotional wellbeing is prioritised alongside learning and our classrooms are designed to be sensory-friendly, providing calm, supportive environments that help students feel safe, regulated and ready to engage.

At Kings Park School (KPS), we place the safety, well-being and development of our students at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and aspirational learning environment for children and young people with a range of neurodivergent profiles and social, emotional and mental health needs.

2.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE

This policy is compliant with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 as amended 2023-2024 and supports best practices in safeguarding, governance and school improvement.

It is also compliant with the following:

- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 2002
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- Education and Skills Act 2008
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020

This policy has due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024) 'Staffing and employment advice for schools'
- DfE (2022) 'ID checking guidelines for standard/enhanced DBS check applications from 1 July 2021'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2024) 'Recruit teachers from overseas'
- Disclosure & Barring Service (2024) 'Regulated activity with children in England and Wales'
- Home Office (2024) 'Employer's guide to right to work checks'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Single Central Record (SCR) Policy
- DBS Policy
- Work Experience Policy
- Records Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy

3.0 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this Safer Recruitment Policy is to ensure that Kings Park School adopts robust and consistent recruitment practices that safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people in our care.

This policy is underpinned by the statutory guidance set out in **DfE (2025) Keeping Children Safe in Education**, which places a legal duty on schools to take appropriate steps to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with pupils.

Kings Park School is committed to ensuring that all recruitment and selection procedures reflect our duty to protect children from harm, by:

- Embedding safeguarding throughout every stage of the recruitment process.
- Promoting a culture of vigilance and accountability.
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers share our commitment to safeguarding and child protection.

This policy applies to all appointments including employees, volunteers, governors, contractors and agency staff and forms part of our wider safeguarding framework.

4.0 OUR ETHOS AND VALUES

We are guided by our school motto: ***"Inspiring Dreams, Building Bright Futures Together."*** Our core values are:

- ***Kind Words***: We speak with empathy and understanding
- ***Positive Minds***: We approach challenges with optimism and resilience
- ***Strong Hearts***: We show courage, compassion and strength in our relationships.

These values are more than aspirations—they are embedded in every interaction, decision and environment within Kings Park School.
Kind Words reflect our belief in the power of language to heal, uplift and include. Whether it is peer encouragement, staff guidance or family communication, we model respectful, thoughtful speech in all we do.
Positive Minds encourage our students and staff to reframe difficulties as opportunities to learn and grow. We promote a strengths-based approach that focuses on what each individual child can do and how they can build confidence through success.
Strong Hearts remind us of the importance of compassion, resilience and relationships. We teach students to persist through challenges, support others and show bravery in being true to themselves.
Together, these values underpin our approach to behaviour, learning and building a safe, inclusive school community.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

"Teaching role" refers to a role involving planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils; delivering lessons to pupils; and assessing and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils. These activities are not teaching work for the purposes of KCSIE if the person carrying out the activity does so (other than for the purposes of induction) subject to the direction and supervision of a qualified teacher or other person nominated by the headteacher to provide such direction and supervision.

A **"standard DBS"** provides information about convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer, regardless of whether they are spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. The law allows for certain old and minor matters to be filtered out.

An **"enhanced DBS"** provides the same information as the standard DBS, plus any additional information e.g. interviews and allegations, held by the police which a chief officer reasonably believes to be relevant and considers ought to be disclosed.

An **"enhanced DBS with barred list check"** check is required for when people are working or seeking to work in regulated activity with children. This check allows for additional checks to be made as to whether the person appears on the children's barred list.

The **"children's barred list"** is a list maintained by the DBS which covers individuals who are unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. In addition, where an enhanced DBS including a barred list check is obtained, the certificate will also detail whether the candidate is subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 or section 167A of the Education Act 2002.

A **"section 128 check"** provides for the Secretary of State to direct that a person may be prohibited or restricted from participating in the management of an independent school (which includes academies and free schools). A person prohibited under section 128 is also disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a maintained school.

"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 to be at risk of abusing children.

6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Agreeing and monitoring effective policies to ensure recruitment at the school is in accordance with the legislation outlined above.
- Ensuring that staff recruitment is as safe as possible, as well as fair and compliant with the relevant legislation.
- Ensuring appropriate checks have been carried out on staff, volunteers, contractors and agency workers working within the school.
- Appointing an appropriate recruitment panel.
- Ensuring that all recruitment panel members have undertaken unconscious bias training before the selection process begins.
- Ensuring that at least one member of the recruitment panel has undergone safer recruitment training.
- Ensuring that all members of the recruitment panel understand their role, i.e. advisory or decision making.
- 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.
- Benchmarking the success of any advertising methods used, as well as the overall success of the recruitment process.
- Ensuring a member of the board is on the recruitment panel for a new headteacher.
- 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 that equal opportunities are established and implemented throughout the recruitment process.
- Ensuring that the salary of the successful candidate is determined.
- Accommodating the needs of new employees and making reasonable adjustments when necessary.
- Ensuring that the DPO reviews this policy and that any recruitment data that is kept is in accordance with the Records Management Policy.
- Ensuring that they have the skills to carry out effective selection processes, including knowing when and how to request references.
- Establishing a recruitment panel including at least one individual who has completed safer recruitment training within the past five years.

The recruitment panel is responsible for:

- Creating the advert and ensuring it meets all the necessary requirements.
- Shortlisting the potential candidates with the aim of reducing the application field and identifying those with the potential to effectively undertake the role.
- Appropriately delegating responsibility for recruitment to the headteacher.
- Ensuring that the interview addresses leadership ability, team working skills, integrity, understanding of the school's ethos and vision and why the candidate believes they would be a good fit for the school.
- Ensuring that the interview addresses safeguarding practices.
- Ensuring that the interview addresses the candidate's motivation, reasons for being interested in joining the school and attitude to working with children.
- Appointing an appointing officer who will be responsible for the entire management of the recruitment process.
- Agreeing with the successful candidate when other members of the school community will be informed about their appointment, including staff members and parents.
- Ensuring that references have been received where requested.

- Ensuring that all references for a shortlisted candidate are obtained prior to interview, properly scrutinised and that information is not contradictory, unclear, or incomplete, with clarification requested when appropriate.
- Asking previous employers of new staff members whether the individual has been subject to capability procedures in the previous two years.
- Where possible, ensuring that the shortlisting panel and interviewing panel are comprised of the same people.

The appointing officer is responsible for:

- Managing the entire recruitment process.
- Sourcing suitable candidates.
- Acting as a point of contact between candidates and the school.
- Reviewing and scrutinising candidates' applications and identifying any gaps.
- Preparing the recruitment panel to conduct interviews.
- Organising interviews with shortlisted candidates.
- 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.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring appropriate checks have been carried out on prospective staff, volunteers, contractors and agency workers working within the school.
- 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.
- Leading the interview when the candidate is at a lower level.
- Ensuring that the successful candidate receives the appropriate training e.g. safeguarding and induction.
- Ensuring that all relevant staff members are familiarised with this policy.
- During the recruitment process and especially during the initial stages, the recruitment panel and the headteacher 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
- Ensure ongoing suitability checks (including DBS update service status, overseas checks, and declarations regarding personal relationships with pupils) are reviewed regularly in line with KCSIE 2025 Part 3.

The DPO is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all references are handled in line with the Data Protection Policy and relevant legislation.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Deciding when it is appropriate or necessary to disclose any safeguarding concerns or allegations as part of a reference, in line with KCSIE.
- Discussing with the headteacher the suitability of a candidate when a reference has disclosed safeguarding concerns or prior allegations.

7.0 PLANNING, ADVERTISING & SHORTLISTING

The job information and associated documents will be published online. The full requirements of the role will be clearly explained, including any employment vetting requirements such as a DBS check.
The recruitment panel will comprise an appointing officer, who is responsible for the management of the entire recruitment process and at least two other members of staff, with the headteacher usually being one of these. The recruitment panel will be an odd number so majority votes can be cast. At least one member

of the recruitment panel will have successfully completed up-to-date safer recruitment training. The recruitment panel will create the advertisement.
Once a vacancy has been identified, the school will allow an appropriate amount of time for planning and structuring the recruitment process.

The Governing Board and headteacher will:

- Decide on the recruitment timeframe.
- Decide who will be involved in the process and what their roles will be e.g. who forms the recruitment panel and who will lead interviewing.
- Prepare the documents that will be provided to candidates, including the 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.
- Ensure that application packs, where relevant, state that candidates must be willing to sign a self-declaration form to obtain information about staff disqualification, in line with the Childcare Act 2006.

ADVERTISING

The school will consider the following information when advertising for a role within the school:

- The skills, abilities, experience, attitude and behaviours required for the post
- The safeguarding requirements, including to what extent the role will involve contact with children and whether the appointed staff member will be engaging in regulated activity

Advertisements will include:

- A statement of the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils whilst making clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and person specification.
- Information surrounding whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

Vacancies will be advertised through external media, such as Kent Teach, Facebook, Instagram, Linked In and on our school website with due consideration to the school's Staff Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, ensuring that the advertisement reaches a wide range of groups. Advertisements will contain a statement of commitment to ensuring equal rights. Advertisements will include, or link to, a job description, person specification and detail the closing date.
Links to application forms will be accessible on the school's website.
The school may utilise social media for recruitment and if doing so, will create a social media recruitment strategy to ensure that the advertisement is reaching the right people and is communicating the ethos of the school effectively.
When an advert receives a response, the recruitment panel will ensure that candidates receive the application pack.

APPLICATION FORMS

Applicants will be reminded in the application form or elsewhere in the information provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if they are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.
Applicants will be required to provide the following:

- Personal details e.g. their current and former names, current address and national insurance number.
- Details of their current or most recent employment, including the reason for leaving.
- Full employment history, including explanations for any gaps in their employment.
- Qualifications, the awarding body and the date of the award.
- Details of references.
- A statement of their personal qualities and an explanation of why they meet the person specification to be a suitable candidate for the role.
- A declaration form outlining whether they are barred from teaching.

- A self-declaration of their criminal record or disclosure of any information making them unsuitable to work with children
- Applicants will need to sign a declaration which confirms that the information they have provided is true.

The school will only accept a CV alongside a completed application form; a CV on its own will not be accepted. When shortlisting candidates for an interview, all application forms will be considered.

Candidates who are shortlisted will meet all the essential aspects of the person specification requirements. The school will ensure that the shortlisting process is as systematic as possible and that the recruitment panel reads through all applications. Each member of the panel will create their own shortlist which will then be collated and discussed. Candidates will be assessed against the same shortlisting criteria to ensure a fair process.

SHORTLISTING

When shortlisting candidates, the school will:

- Ensure that at least two people carry out the shortlisting proceedings – ideally, these two people will also conduct the interview.
- Assess whether there are any inconsistencies or gaps in the candidate's employment and consider the reasons given for them.
- Explore all potential concerns.
- online searches (digital footprint checks) will be completed on shortlisted candidates to identify any potential safeguarding or reputational concerns, in line with KCSIE 2025.

Requests for further information from candidates will be replied to promptly. All applications will be replied to with a letter notifying candidates whether they have been shortlisted or not.

7.0 INTERVIEW

Invitation to interview

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.
- What documents they should bring.

Candidates will be offered a variety of flexible interview appointments, where possible.

Pre-interview checks

The recruitment panel will complete the necessary pre-interview checks.
Pre-interview checks will include the following:

- Online checks where necessary and required.
- Review of application to take note of:
    - Periods of unemployment.
    - Positions currently/previously held.
    - Highlight areas of personal statement that need discussing or questioning in interview.

The interview

During the interview process, candidates will be asked standard questions, and their responses will be recorded for ease of comparison by a designated note-taker on the interview panel. The recruitment panel

will ask open questions to assess the candidate's experience and suitability for the post and to explore the candidate's motivation towards safeguarding and their suitability to work with children. The school will use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post.
Interview questions seek to:

- Find out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children.
- Exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children.
- Looking at any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently and asking about the reasons for this.
- Seek examples of the candidate's previous experience.

Interviews will also be used to explore the potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children.
Areas that may raise concerns and lead to further enquiry include:

- Implication that adults and children are equal.
- Lack of recognition or understanding of the vulnerability of children.
- Inappropriate idealisation of children.
- Inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children.
- Indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours.
- Attempts to push or overstep boundaries.
- Consistent rule-breaking behaviour.

Candidates shortlisted for interview will be given the opportunity to complete a self-disclosure form before their interview, to give the interview panel time to consider the information provided. Candidates will also be asked to show proof of identification and qualifications at interview – this proof will be viewed and checked by the interview panel.
The candidate will be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns or ask any questions.

After the interview

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

- Assess all candidates' performance using the same agreed criteria.
- Ask the successful candidate to provide proof of identification and qualifications for the school's records and to complete the DBS check as soon as possible.
- Contact and provide feedback to the unsuccessful candidates – feedback will be verbal and based on evidence of their performance against the person specification for the role.

Interview notes and assessment materials will be held securely for an appropriate amount of time after the interviews, in line with the Records Management Policy, in case any aspect of the recruitment process is challenged.
After choosing a successful candidate, the school will:

- Make a conditional offer of employment to the candidate.
- Ask the successful candidate to provide identification and proof of qualifications, if this has not already been done.
- Complete the relevant pre-appointment checks including section 128 where applicable.

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.

8.0 PRE APPOINTMENT CHECKS

All appointments will be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-appointment checks. These checks seek to identify whether there is anything that would make the candidate an unsuitable appointment for working with children or as a teacher.
When appointing new staff, the school will:

- Verify the candidate's identity e.g. checking the name and birth date on a birth certificate and verifying any name changes.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check via the candidate and, for candidates engaging in regulated activity, barred list information.
- Obtain a separate children's barred list check if the individual will start work in regulated activity with children before the DBS certificate is available.
- Verify a candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their role.
- Verify the person's right to work in the UK.
- Make further checks as appropriate on any individual who has lived or worked outside the UK.
- Verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- Check individuals taking up management positions are not subject to a section 128 direction.

- Ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to work in Reception classes, or in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8, are not disqualified from working in these settings under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations.

- **For those in management, trustee or governor roles, conduct a section 128 check.**

The recruitment panel will ensure any candidate employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order, or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE before its abolition in March 2012.

The recruitment panel will assess all cases fairly and on an individual basis. Where a decision has been made not to appoint somebody because of their convictions, it will be clearly documented to enable the school a chance to defend its decision if challenged.
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

The school will also consider the incident in the context of the Teachers' Standards and Teacher misconduct guidance, if the applicant is applying for a teaching post.

If the school has reason to believe that an individual is barred, it is an offence under section 9 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 for the school to allow the individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

In line with KCSIE, the school will not require candidates to have an enhanced DBS certificate or undergo checks for events that may have occurred outside the UK if, in the three months prior to their appointment, the candidate has worked in England in a post:

- In a school which brought them into regular contact with children or young people; or
- In a school since 12 May 2006 which did not bring the person into regular contact with CYP.

This is because the candidate will have already undergone this process in their previous position.

Volunteers

For all volunteers, the school will undertake a written risk assessment and use professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, will be required.

All unsupervised volunteers engaging in regulated activity will be required to provide the school with an enhanced DBS check with a barred list check. Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not need to be re-

checked if they have already had a DBS check (including barred list information); however, the school may decide to conduct a repeat DBS check.

Candidates who have lived outside the UK

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.

If a candidate is unable to provide the correct documentation, they cannot submit a DBS check. This is because the right to work in the UK cannot be established.
Following the UK's exit from the EU, schools and colleges should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

Agency and third-party staff

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 notification from the organisation confirming that they have carried out the same checks as the school would otherwise perform on any individual who will be working at the school, or who will be providing education on the school's behalf, including through online delivery.
Confirmation will also be obtained that the individual who presents for work is the same person on whom all checks have been completed. A copy of photographic identification will generally be kept where appropriate.
The school will obtain a copy of the enhanced DBS certificate from the agency or third-party organisation where it has been obtained before the person is due to commence work and has disclosed any matter or information.

Trainee and student teachers

The school will ensure that enhanced DBS certificates and barred list checks are obtained on all salaried candidates for initial teacher training who are in regulated activity.
Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. The school will obtain written confirmation from the agency that the checks have been carried out.

Contractors

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.
The school will set out its safeguarding requirements in the contract between the contractor's organisation and the school.

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.

Adults who supervise children on work experience

If the school is organising work experience placements, it will ensure that the placement provider has policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. More information related to checks on work experience providers is outlined in the school's Work Experience Policy.

Governors

The Governing Board may request an enhanced DBS certificate without a barred list check on an individual as part of the appointment process for governors. An enhanced DBS certificate (which will include a barred list check) will only be requested if the governor will be engaging in regulated activity; this also applies to volunteer governors.
Associate members will not be asked to undertake a DBS check.

- An identity check.
- Confirmation of the right to work in the UK.
- An enhanced DBS check.
- Where required, additional information if the individual has lived outside the UK for a period of 12 months or longer.

Governors will be subject to a section 128 direction check.

Right to work checks

The school will obtain evidence that all candidates for a position have the right to work in the UK by either conducting a manual document-based check, or by using the government's online portal. This will be done before a candidate is offered a position.
When conducting a manual, document-based check, the school will ensure that the documents received from candidates are acceptable in line with government guidance and from the appropriate list: List A for candidates with a permanent right to work in the UK, or List B for candidates with a temporary right to work in the UK. Checks on documents will be conducted in line with section 18 of this policy.
The school will obtain proof of candidates' immigration status in the UK.
The school will contact the Home Office if a statutory excuse must be established in the following circumstances:

- The candidate provides a document confirming receipt of an application to EUSS on or before 30 June 2021
- The candidate provides a non-digital certificate of application confirming receipt of an application to the EUSS on or after 1 July 2021
- The school has checked a digital certificate of application and has been directed to the Home Office's Employer Checking Service
- The candidate provides an Application Registration Card stating the holder is permitted to undertake the work in question
- The school is satisfied it has not been provided with any acceptable documents because the candidate has an outstanding application with the Home Office made before their previous permission expired, or has an appeal or review pending against the Home Office's decision and cannot provide evidence of their right to work as a result
- The school considers that it has not been provided with any acceptable documents, but the person presents other information indicating they are a long-term resident of the UK, i.e. having arrived before 1988.

The school will not make assumptions about a person's right to work in the UK, or their immigration status, on the basis of their race, ethnicity, nationality, length of residence in the UK or background. All candidates, including British citizens, will have their right to work in the UK checked.
Where a candidate's right to work is time-limited, the school will conduct a follow-up check in advance of its expiry.

The school may use a certified digital identity service provider (IDSP) to conduct right to work checks on candidates.

IDENTIFICATION CHECKING PROCESS

When checking the validity of identifying documents, the school will ensure that this is done in the presence of the holder e.g. in person or via a live video link. In both cases, the school will be in physical possession of the original documents. The school will only accept valid, current and original documentation in its physical form. The school will not accept photocopies or documentation printed from the internet e.g. internet bank statements.
The school will request documents with photographic identity, such as a passport and compare this against the candidate's likeness. The school will not accept documents that are not in the candidate's current name as recorded on the application form.
The school will ensure that the candidate declares all previous name changes and provides documentary evidence to support the name change. If the candidate is unable to provide evidence to support the name change, the school will hold a discussion with the candidate about the reasons why. The school will always aim to check the name on the candidate's birth certificate in order to validate their identity.
The school will compare the candidate's address history with any other information the candidate has provided, such as their CV.
The school will ensure that all letters and statements provided by the candidate are recent e.g. within a three-month period.
The school will keep a dated record of every document that has been checked for the duration of the candidate's employment and for a further two years after they have left the school. This will be either as a hard copy or in a scanned format which cannot be manually altered e.g. JPEG or PDF document and will be made available to the appropriate authorities if and when requested.
In line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, the school will only retain copies of DBS certificates where there is a valid reason for doing so and only for as long as is needed to consider the information provided – this will not be for longer than six months.
When information is destroyed, the school may keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result of this vetting and the recruitment decision taken.
The school may use a certified digital IDSP to secure DBS checks on candidates.

9.0 REFERENCES

Requesting references

Once a candidate, including an internal candidate, has been offered a position, references will be requested and scrutinised by the recruitment panel. Any concerns will be resolved satisfactorily prior to confirming an appointment. References will always be requested directly from the referee and from a senior person with appropriate authority, rather than a colleague. The school's standard request form will always be used to obtain references.
References will be requested in written form from the candidate's current employer – if they are unemployed, verification of their most recent period of employment and reasons for leaving will be obtained from their previous employer. Wherever possible, at least one reference will be from employment through which the candidate worked with children.

If the applicant has never worked with children, the school will ensure that a reference from their current employer is received.
If the candidate is a school leaver or has not been in work for over **two years**, a character reference will be requested.
When a candidate is applying for a teaching role (including the role of headteacher), information about the details of any capability procedures in the **previous two years** that they may have been subject to and the reasons for these, will be requested from their current or former employer.
Concerns raised following a candidate's references will be explored further with the referee where appropriate and discussed with the candidate at interview.
Open references e.g. 'to whom it may concern' testimonials and unverified information provided by the candidate as part of the application process, will not be relied upon. Electronic references will be checked to ensure that they originate from a legitimate source.

Checking references

References will be checked upon receipt to ensure that all questions have been answered satisfactorily and that information is not contradictory or incomplete. The referee will be contacted to provide further clarification where appropriate e.g. if some answers are vague or insufficient, or contradictory information has been provided. The reference 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 at interview.

Where a reference appears incomplete or other concerns arise, the school will carry out one of the following actions:

- Call the referee to discuss the reference further.
- Email the referee the reference for confirmation of its accuracy.

The recruitment panel will ensure that any past disciplinary action or allegations disclosed as part of a reference are considered carefully when assessing the candidate's suitability for the role. If this involves safeguarding or potential safeguarding concerns, the DSL will be consulted to help assess the candidate's suitability.

Before making a decision not to appoint a candidate based on an unsatisfactory reference, the recruitment panel will consider if HR advice is necessary. Once the decision is made, the headteacher will record this on the recruitment file as the reason for non-appointment.

All members of staff who provide a reference will be responsible themselves for checking the content to ensure that it only contains factual and verifiable statements. If there is any doubt about whether to include information, caution will be exercised, and it will be omitted. Alternatively, advice will be sought from a senior figure e.g. the headteacher or the chair of governors.

When obtaining and checking references, the school will:

- Not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern.
- Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference.
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority.
- Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed.
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children, where applicable.
- Always verify any information with the person who provided the reference.
- Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source.
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate.
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post.
- Ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

Providing references

References will only be provided once written consent has been obtained from the person requesting a reference.
The member of staff providing a reference will follow this policy's procedures and the prospective employer's requests as much as is reasonably possible e.g. if a pro-forma is provided, they will complete the form. If the reference is not requested in a specific format, the member of staff will decide the most appropriate method e.g. a pro-forma or a letter-formatted reference.
The headteacher will decide in exceptional circumstances if a reference cannot be provided or if certain questions asked by the prospective employer cannot be answered, with HR advice sought when appropriate.

Staff members will make the headteacher aware when they have been asked to provide a personal reference e.g. for a current or former colleague. The staff member will make it clear within the reference that it is a personal one and is not written for or on behalf of the school. The staff member will use their own paper or an email address unaffiliated with the school and ensure that the reference is not linked to the school in any way.

Details of any capability procedures in the **previous two years** for a teacher (including headteacher) or former teacher at the school and the reasons for these, will be provided if requested.
If, as part of a settlement agreement, the school has agreed to provide a reference for a member of staff, the headteacher will ensure it is provided in line with the agreement and this policy. In circumstances where new evidence emerges that indicates information provided in the reference is incorrect, the headteacher will decide if the reference is changed or withdrawn, with legal advice sought where necessary and will notify the employee of any decision first.
The school will ensure that any information provided confirms whether they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and only provide the facts of any substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations, including a group of low-level concerns about the same individual, that meet the harm threshold.
Any repeated concerns or allegations which do not meet the harm threshold which have been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated, or malicious will not be included in any reference.

Content of references

Basic information will always be expected in references received and provided e.g. skills, knowledge, duties undertaken, experience working with children and personal characteristics, in addition to any information relating to safeguarding. Further relevant comments will be made as much as is reasonably possible in line with the employer's requests, provided they are verifiable and objective e.g. through appraisals or attendance records.
References will contain only factual and verifiable information and will not include speculation e.g. about a former employee's suitability for a job, or hearsay. The person providing the reference will ensure all comments have a factual basis and that an impression is not given which is misleadingly positive or negative. Performance issues or concerns which have not been discussed or raised with the employee beforehand will not be mentioned.
All members of staff providing references will be made aware that information provided verbally to the prospective employer is subject to the same duties as written information and will avoid making verbal statements. Where it is necessary or appropriate, verbal information will be provided only in line with this policy's procedures e.g. all statements must be verifiable and objective.

Previous disciplinary action

The recruitment panel will ensure that any references requested by the school include a section asking for any past disciplinary action or allegations to be disclosed. Any disclosures will be carefully considered when assessing the candidate's suitability for the role, in line with this policy.
Information from DBS checks will not be included in references provided by the school. Information regarding criminal offences from other sources will not be included, unless the headteacher deems it appropriate and HR advice has been sought.

When providing references, the disclosure of information about past disciplinary action or allegations not relating to safeguarding will be provided where it is deemed appropriate e.g. it is relevant to the staff member of former staff member's suitability for the role. Information relating to disciplinary action will generally only be disclosed if penalties or sanctions remain in place for the employee.
Allegations which were proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious e.g. relating to misconduct, will not be included in a reference – this includes if it is a history of repeated concerns or allegations which have been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious. The member of staff providing the reference will make no comments about their own personal views on the veracity of allegations.
If an allegation exists which has yet to be investigated or an investigation is incomplete, the headteacher will seek HR advice and legal advice where necessary, on what information, if any, should be provided to the prospective employer.

Use of data and confidentiality

Personal data relating to references will be handled in line with the Data Protection Policy. All references will be properly addressed and marked private and confidential.
In accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018) and the UK GDPR any personal information will be processed fairly and lawfully and will be kept safe and secure e.g. in locked, non-portable containers or, for electronic information, password protected. Access will be strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.
Information relating to an individual's health and sensitive personal data e.g. information relating to the individual's ethnicity, religion or trade union membership, will not be disclosed as part of a reference unless 'express consent' has been received from the individual for this purpose.
The person requesting a reference will be offered the opportunity to see it before it is sent, unless the headteacher decides this is not appropriate; however, the school is aware that ultimately, they cannot prevent the person receiving a copy in line with the Data Protection Act. If the person raises comments about the reference before it is sent, the member of staff responsible for the reference will consider the comments and, if they decide to leave it unchanged, record the reason(s) behind their non-agreement.

After the pre-appointment checks and references

Once the pre-employment checks have been completed, the recruitment panel will:

- Agree a start date with the candidate.
- Destroy the completed self-declaration forms.
- Submit contractual paperwork, including the completed DBS check, copies of identification, references, proof of qualifications, pre-employment medical enquiry form, P45, application/equal opportunities and emergency contacts.
- Add the required details of the checks carried out to the school's SCR.

10.0 SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD

The school will maintain and regularly update the SCR.
All new employees will be added to the record, which will include:

- All staff (including supply staff) who work at the school.
- All others who work in regular contact with children in the school or college, including volunteers.
- All members of the proprietor body.

The bullet points below set out the minimum information that must be recorded in respect of staff members (including teacher trainees on salaried routes). The record will indicate whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained and the date on which each check was completed or certificate obtained:

- An identity check.
- A barred list check.
- An enhanced DBS check .
- A prohibition from teaching check.
- Further checks on people living or working outside the UK, including checks for European Economic Area (EEA) teacher sanctions and restrictions.
- A check of professional qualifications.
- A check to establish the person's right to work in the UK.
- For those in management, trustee or governor roles, a section 128 check.

11.0 SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING

The Governing Board will ensure that the involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received safer recruitment training, the substance of which will, at a minimum, cover the content of part three of KCSIE.
As a measure of good practice, the school will ensure that this training is renewed **every two 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.

12.0 SAFEGUARDING

For references provided to the school, the candidate's suitability will always be assessed with regard to their suitability to work with children. The DSL will be consulted where appropriate.
The DSL will recognise the school's duty to disclose safeguarding concerns overrides any other duties to an employee and ensure the school complies with its safeguarding obligations. The DSL will ensure records are kept of all allegations against staff in line with the most up-to-date version of KCSIE.

For all safeguarding allegations, excluding those proven to be malicious, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, will be kept on the confidential personnel file of the accused member of staff. Accurate information based on these records will be given in response to future requests for a reference, where appropriate.

Safeguarding information will not be given in circumstances where the allegation was found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious – this includes if it is a history of repeated concerns or allegations which have been found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious. The member of staff providing the reference will make no comments about their own personal views on the veracity of allegations.

This policy will be reviewed by senior leaders annually, or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidelines. At every review, the policy will be approved by The Chair of Governors.