St Paul's CE Primary School

Safer Recruitment Policy 2026-27

Agreed by Governing Body on:	**05/02/2025**
Policy Review Date:	**February 2026**

Model policy last checked – November 2023

A Model School Safer Recruitment Policy

Date

Policy statement

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 cooperation 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 and is in line with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE). All posts within school are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare (unfiltered) spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, and have an enhanced DBS check. See also the reference to further BHCC policies/guidance and websites at the end of this document.

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:

1. Ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have received safer recruitment training (BHCC recommends the NSPCC Safer Recruitment training) and successfully completed the associated safer recruitment training assessment.
2. Ensure that every appointment panel includes at least one member who has received safer recruitment training.
3. 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.

4. Keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DfE requirements.
5. 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.
6. Require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the school (that could be relevant to the Employee Code of Conduct/Teacher Standards) to notify the Headteacher in writing of the offence and the penalty.
7. Ensure that relevant staff are not disqualified from working with children under the 2006 Childcare Act.

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the former or most recent employer.
- Verification of the candidate's identity in line with the requirements of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006.
- Satisfactory DBS clearance (enhanced DBS check with children's barred list)
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness.
- Confirmation (where relevant) that the individual is not disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006.
- Verification of qualifications.
- Verification of teacher qualified status, successful completion of induction year and confirmation that the teacher is not subject to any prohibition orders (all accessed from the school via the DfE Employer Access or Teacher Services online check) as required by law for teachers – see: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teacher-status-checks-information-for-employers
- **ACADEMIES and FREE SCHOOLS ONLY** - a check for a section 128 direction (for management positions – including governors - in independent schools including academies and free schools) – see above website to obtain check.
- A section 128 check for all school governors.

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 the policies and procedures

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

- Ensure that the school operates safer 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.

For maintained schools, it is the responsibility of the council's recruitment team to assist with the administration of paper DBS checks for the school. However, most DBS checks are now done online.

In accordance with the School Staffing Regulations and the powers of delegation, 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

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.

Job advertisements will include a statement that the school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and that safeguarding checks will be untaken.

Applications

The form – The school uses a standard application form. CVs will not be accepted. The school requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is short-listed, these gaps will be discussed at interview.

Application forms will include a statement that providing false information or applying for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children 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.

A link to the school's safeguarding policy will be provided.

Shortlisting

At least two people will carry out the shortlisting exercise (usually those who shortlist will also carry out the interview). They will consider inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a signed self-declaration of their criminal record and/or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

References

References for shortlisted candidates will be sent for immediately after shortlisting. The only exception to this is where candidates have indicated on their application forms that that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview and prior to any offer of employment being made. One reference will be sought prior to interview wherever possible.

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. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable.

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 and salary.
- Performance history and conduct including details on any situation where any formal action has been taken using capability procedures within the last 2 years.
- 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 outcome of those.
- Details of any substantiated allegations or concerns that have been raised that meet the harm threshold and relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns. *NB cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious should not be included in employer references.

The school uses a standard Reference Request Form to ensure the details outlined above are included.

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 substantiated allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago 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.

Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants

The school's policy requires short-listed applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all non filtered 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 either prior to or on the interview day. The disclosure of 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 professional interview including a question related to safeguarding children
- Young people panel / activity with children

Proof of identity, right to work in the UK, verification of qualifications and/or professional status and online searches

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 DBS check on the preferred candidate.

Shortlisted 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.

The school will also use the Employer Access online service to verify the teacher's qualified status, successful completion of induction year and confirmation that the teacher is not subject to a prohibition order prior to making an offer of employment.

See https://www.gov.uk/teacher-status-checks-information-for-employers

KCSiE recommends that schools should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence and inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done. However, it is not currently school policy to carry out online searches.

Employment offer

All offers of employment should be conditional on the satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of the DBS disclosure, 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/verified before or as soon as practicable after the appointment is made. In any case, DBS clearance must be received prior to commencement of work.

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

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 (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 an employment tribunal.

Under data protection legislation, 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.

Personnel file records

The school will retain the following information which will make up part of the personnel file for the successful candidate:

- Application form
- References
- Proof of identification
- Proof of professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Evidence that the Employer Access online checks have been made – teaching qualification, successful completion of induction year and no

prohibition orders in place (and section 128 checks for academies/free schools)
- Evidence of medical clearance from occupational health (where applicable)
- Evidence of the DBS clearance (the notification form, DBS certificate reference number, NOT the actual DBS certificate)
- Certificate of Good Conduct or risk assessment and additional reference (where applicable)

Single Central Record (SCR)

In line with DfE requirements, the school will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The central 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 who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members such as specialist sports coach or artists.

The central record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job
- Additionally for those applying for teaching posts, check with DfE Access Online Service against three lists highlighted above
- Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure and Children's Barred List check
- Further overseas records where appropriate
- Checks on Disqualification rules under the 2006 Childcare Act where appropriate
- **Academies/Free schools only:** section 128 checks
- Section 128 checks also apply to maintained governors

It shall also indicate who undertook the check and the date on which the check was completed or the relevant certificate obtained.

In order to record supply staff provided through an agency on the record, the school will require written confirmation (or a completed 'statement of checks' form) 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.

Induction/probation periods

Newly appointed staff will be subject to the appropriate probation period according to their contract of employment but all staff will experience a formal induction to the school. School staff will be given the relevant Codes of Conduct and a copy of the DfE guidance on safe working practice and asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the documents and will follow the guidelines required to maintain professional boundaries at all time. The school has a specific safeguarding

related whistle blowing 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 local authority Safeguarding Children Board Allegations Procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Further reference documents/websites

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) Statutory Guidance

DfE Access Online Service

DBS website

Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006

NSPCC Safer Recruitment Training

Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings published by Safer Recruitment Consortium is available at Home (saferrecruitmentconsortium.org)

This is an updated national code recommended by B&H Safeguarding.

Signed:……(Headteacher). Date:……..

Signed:……(Chair of Governors). Date:……