



Old Vicarage School

Recruitment Policy

This policy applies to the recruitment of all individuals who work at the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Child Protection & Safeguarding and Equal Opportunities policies.

Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care and all staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.

This policy has been produced in line with the DfE guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2022)", "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (August 2018)" and the "ISI Handbook - Commentary on The Regulatory Requirements (as most recently amended)".

The ultimate responsibility for recruitment and selection lies with the Governing Body. The Governing Body has delegated the responsibility to the Head for appointing all staff, with the exception of the Bursar.

Aims and Objectives

The School will endeavour to recruit the applicant best suited to the role based on their abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification. Applicants will not be discriminated against on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

The aim of this Recruitment Policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils, or are otherwise unsuited to working with them. The objective is to ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional and timely manner and in compliance with current employment legislation.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Advertising

The School will normally advertise all vacant posts, internally and externally to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible whilst making clear the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient, suitably qualified internal candidates, or staff are at risk of redundancy, vacancies may initially be advertised internally.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they are required to declare it as soon as they are aware of the application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment process.

Application Forms

Old Vicarage School uses its own application form to obtain a common set of core data from all job applicants. All applicants are required to complete this form which contains questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role. All applicants will be required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in their employment history.

Job Description and Person Specification

Each applicant is sent a job description, which sets out the duties and responsibilities of the job role, and a person specification which details the skills, experience, suitability, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.

The person specification will state that as part of the shortlisting process the school will consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates.

References

Two professional/character references must be provided by the applicant, one of which should be from the applicant's present or most recent employer (and / or where applicable from the last time the applicant worked with children). These will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee, who should be in a senior position with the appropriate authority, and their purpose is to provide necessary objective and factual information. If the referee is School based, the reference will be confirmed with the head teacher as accurate in respect of disciplinary investigations. Any omissions, discrepancies or inconsistencies will be followed up.

All referees are asked to comment on the applicant's suitability for the post and whether they have any reasons to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. Suitability references should also be sought for internal candidates. Internal references are permissible where appropriate.

References for short-listed applicants will usually be sent for immediately after short-listing (unless, for example, an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted prior to interview). References will be obtained as soon as possible before the applicant starts work at the School.

Where electronic references are received, the School will ensure they are from a legitimate source. The School may at its discretion, make telephone contact with any referee to verify the details of the written reference provided.

The School does not accept open references or testimonials.

Shortlisting

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to complete a self declaration of their criminal record and of any information which would make them unsuitable to work with children (whether in a school or otherwise).

During the shortlisting process the interview panel will check all applications, assessing each applicant against the shortlist criteria (job description and person specifications). This will be done objectively at all times, without allowing other aspects of the application, or perception of the applicant, to impact on the decision-making.

As part of the shortlisting process the school will consider carrying 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 might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

The search will purely focus on the shortlisted candidate's suitability for the role and any gaps in their employment. It will not include any aspects of their private life.

The online search will be done by a member of the HR team that is not involved in the interview process.

When preparing a report for the interview panel on shortlisted candidate's online search results, the member of the HR team will be cautious not to discriminate the candidate against any of the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Online search results linked to the protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation) must not be included in the report.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and the same interview panel will see all the applicants for the vacant position. At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training.

The interview panel will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. To meet safeguarding criteria, the panel will explore any anomalies or gaps in the candidate's employment history. Any information disclosed which relates to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case. The interview panel will also question any information (if necessary) that came up during an online search on candidate's suitability for the role.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications (if relevant). Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken.

Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed at the end of the recruitment process.

The Offer of Employment

Offers of employment to all new employees are subject to the receipt of satisfactory proof of identity, two references, medical suitability, right to work in the UK, and qualifications, relevant DBS checks and overseas checks (where relevant). Copies of all necessary document proofs will be held on the individual's personnel file.

Depending on their role, the School may also need to undertake Prohibition from Teaching & Management checks and obtain disqualification declarations.

All new employees will require an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) clearance certificate. Details of the DBS certificate and the dates of all other required checks will be logged on the School Central Register. Copies of DBS certificates will not be retained for longer than six months. The school will keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result and the recruitment decision taken.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificates

The School must apply for enhanced DBS clearance before the commencement of employment of any new member of staff and see the original DBS certificate before the applicant may be treated as checked. However, if the School has received official advance information from the registered umbrella body that the DBS certificate has been issued and contains no information, this may be taken into account when assessing appropriate safeguards.

If the DBS certificate has not been issued or seen by the School by the scheduled start date, the Head may permit an individual to commence work under supervision, for a limited period, provided barring list clearance has been received, all other pre-appointment checks have been completed, and an appropriate written risk assessment has been undertaken. The individual will be advised of the situation and their appointment will not be confirmed until the certificate has been seen.

If the new DBS certificate is issued more than three months before employment commences, the school will undertake a separate updated barring list check just prior to the individual's start date.

Any employee who takes leave for more than three months (excluding maternity leave), will be re-checked before they return to work.

Members of staff are made aware of their obligation to inform the Head of any cautions or convictions that arise during the course of their employment with the School.

Portability of DBS Certificate Checks

If an applicant has signed up to the DBS Annual Update Service, and gives their consent, the School may apply for an on-line status check to be carried out to confirm that no new information has been added to their DBS certificate since its issue. The School will check original ID to confirm the details on the certificate match those on the individual's identity document and examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check.

Acceptance of existing DBS Certificates

At the Head's discretion, the School may accept an existing enhanced DBS certificate provided the School has sight of the original certificate, and:

- the applicant has worked in a school in England, in regular contact with children or young persons, during a period which ended not more than three months before their appointment with Old Vicarage School commences, and
- their existing DBS certificate was obtained for that employment.

The School will check original ID to confirm the details on the certificate match those on the individual's identity document, and that the original DBS certificate is for the appropriate workforce and level of check. The School will always undertake an updated barring list check when accepting an existing certificate.

Dealing with convictions

On the application form, we ask the candidate if they need to make us aware of anything which may be disclosed on their DBS certificate. If a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions that were not disclosed at interview, a formal meeting will take place with the Head or Bursar to establish the facts. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as well as the nature and requirements of the role. We will also consider:

- the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred and if it was a one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances;

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, he/she can do so by contacting the DBS direct.

In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the School may defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Safer Recruitment Checks

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK

All applicants are required to produce original identification documentation (either a passport, birth certificate, photo driving licence) and visa/biometric residence permit (if applicable) as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK.

From 1 January 2021, there is no longer freedom of movement between the UK and the EU. From that date, all foreign nationals wishing to move to the UK to work are required to obtain a visa in advance through the points-based immigration system.

Citizens of the EEA or Switzerland who were living in the UK by 31 December 2020 had up until 30 June 2021 to apply for settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

If qualifications (academic or vocational) are required for the position or the applicant has been appointed on the basis of qualifications claimed, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained those claimed in their application. The Teaching Regulation Authority (TRA) Teacher Services website may be used to carry out a range of teacher status checks including verification of qualified teacher status (QTS) and the completion of teacher induction or probation.

Medical Fitness

Applicants must possess the appropriate level of physical and mental fitness before any appointment offer is confirmed. All staff are required to make an appropriate physical and mental declaration in writing.

Overseas checks

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK, for a period of three months or more during the last five years, must undergo the same checks as all other staff in the school. Where possible, applicants will be asked to obtain a certificate of good conduct, police check or equivalent from the country in question. Extra references may be requested for applicants from countries which do not provide criminal record checks or where it has not been possible to obtain a certificate of good conduct.

If the applicant has been working in a school in the UK, in regular contact with children or young persons during the three months prior to their start date at Old Vicarage, and has not gone back overseas, there is no requirement for the previous overseas checks to be repeated.

Enhanced DBS checks will be required for all applicants with recent periods of overseas residence including those with little or no previous UK residence.

Prohibition from Teaching Orders

A check will be made on the TRA Teacher Services' website to confirm that any member of staff who carries out teaching work is not subject to a Teaching Prohibition Order issued by the Secretary of State. This check is also required for peripatetic/visiting teachers, club staff, sports coaches, teaching assistants and gap students.

Teachers recruited from the EEA (European Economic Area)

Teachers recruited from the EEA will be requested to provide proof of their past conduct as a teacher. This should be a letter of professional standing issued by the professional regulating authority in the country in which they worked. This evidence will be considered alongside other information obtained to help assess their suitability.

Prohibition from Management Orders (Section 128 Direction)

Any individuals who are subject to a Section 128 direction are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school. This applies to members of proprietor bodies, head teachers, any teaching positions on the senior leadership team and any teaching positions which carry a departmental headship. For non-teaching staff, this only applies to posts which are part of the senior leadership team.

This check is usually automatically undertaken as part of an Enhanced DBS check but may be independently verified via the TRA Teacher Services' website.

Disqualification from Childcare

The School may not employ individuals to work with Early Years children, or allow them to be directly concerned in their management, if they are "disqualified" under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018.

Children in the Early Years (Little Vic Nursery & Reception Classes) receive education at the main Old Vicarage School site and so this requirement affects all staff and volunteers in our school and not just those who directly look after these pupils. Accordingly, all new staff are required to sign a declaration which confirms their suitability in this regard.

Checks on other individuals

Agency Supply Staff

When the School needs to use the services of a supply agency, it will use agencies with whom it has established a good relationship. The agency is required to send the School confirmation that all necessary safer recruitment checks have been undertaken.

When the member of supply staff arrives at the School, their identity and DBS certificate will be checked to confirm that they are the same person on the documentation from the agency.

Non-Agency Supply staff

The school may identify and recruit its own supply staff. In these instances, all the same recruitment checks that are carried out for similar employed members of staff are undertaken on these individuals.

Volunteers

Old Vicarage School has always welcomed volunteer help and support, especially from its body of parents. Volunteers who are not constantly supervised by an established member of staff will be subject to an enhanced DBS check (which includes a barring list check.)

The School is not legally permitted to request barred list information on fully supervised volunteers as they are not considered to be engaged in regulated activity. The School will undertake a risk assessment to decide whether to request an enhanced DBS check on the prospective volunteer.

Board of Governors

All School Governors will be subject to enhanced DBS (with barred list checks if they are undertaking regulated activity) and prohibition from management checks. An enhanced DBS check undertaken by the Secretary of State will be obtained for the Chair of Governors.

Disqualification declarations will be obtained for the Chair & Vice-Chair and any Governor with specific responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Overseas checks will be undertaken as the Chair considers appropriate on any individual who has lived or worked overseas.

Peripatetic Staff/Sports Coaches/Club Staff

All the above will be subject to exactly the same checks as employed members of staff. Prohibition from teaching checks will be undertaken on any staff who teach whether their services are paid for by the school or the parents directly.

If provided via an Agency, the agency is required to send the School confirmation that all necessary safer recruitment checks have been undertaken and the individual's ID and DBS certificate will be checked on arrival.

Contractors

External contractors are required to provide written confirmation that they have carried out the required safe recruitment checks on their staff who will be working at the School during term-time. The School will check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

The identity of any contractors who need to carry out repairs or service equipment on the school premises during term-time will be checked on arrival. They will be appropriately supervised for the duration of their visit.

Trainee/Student Teachers

Old Vicarage School does welcome trainee teachers from time to time on a voluntary basis. In such cases, the School requires the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provider to demonstrate that the relevant checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. The identity of the trainee teacher will be checked on arrival.

School Pupils on Work Experience

School pupils who are undertaking pre-arranged short-term, unpaid, work experience do not usually require vetting checks. Their ID will be checked on arrival and they will be fully supervised for the duration of their time at the school.

Existing members of staff

Should we have concerns regarding the suitability to work with children of an existing member of staff, this will be treated as safeguarding matter and referred to the DSL: a new Enhanced DBS check will be undertaken.

Offsite Activities

We seek assurance that those staff employed by other organisations (eg. sports coaches), who are responsible for supervising our pupils on a site other than the school, have been checked for suitability. Members of School staff will always be present for the duration of any off-site activity.

Visiting Speakers

The School makes use of external speakers covering both academic and wider curriculum topics and the organising members of staff are responsible for ensuring they are both suitable and appropriately supervised for the duration of their visit.

Where the visitor is presenting on topics of Religion, Philosophy or Politics, the School will have regard to the Prevent guidance and a specific risk assessment will be undertaken and submitted to the Deputy Head or Head who must approve the visit before it can be confirmed. Research may be undertaken via the internet in order to obtain further information as to their suitability. Details relating to these speakers are recorded on the School's Single Centralised Register (SCR).

Induction Programme

As part of their induction programme, all new staff are provided with the information and documents set out in the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

All new staff will receive appropriate Safeguarding training. The School will continue to provide ongoing training and support for all staff as identified through the appraisal procedure and as required by the School.

Single Centralised Register (SCR)

In addition to the staff records kept in the School, a Single Centralised Register (SCR) of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the DfE requirements. The SCR contains details of:

- All employees working at the School;
- All supply staff to the School whether employed directly or through an agency;
- All others who have been chosen to work in the School but who are not members of staff. This includes volunteers, Governors, peripatetic staff and others who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils eg: sports coaches, club staff etc.
- Visiting Speakers (presenting on topics of Religion, Philosophy or Politics)

The School's designated Safeguarding Governor is responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Register and reporting his/her findings to the full Governing Body.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The School is legally required to undertake the identified safe recruitment checks. If an applicant is successful in their application, the School will retain on his/her personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process.

This documentation will be retained securely for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the School. It will be retained for a period of six years after employment terminates, after which it will be destroyed.

Referral to the DBS, Teaching Regulation Authority (TRA) and Ofsted

Whilst this policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safe recruitment and details the required pre-employment checks, the School also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS, in circumstances where an individual has:

- applied for a position at the School despite being barred from working with children; or
- been removed by the School or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child.

If the individual (including an agency worker) referred to the DBS is a teacher, or if the threshold for reporting to the DBS has not been met but it is felt that the teacher committed serious misconduct, and was dismissed or might have been dismissed had they not left first, the School will consider whether to tell the Secretary of State via the TRA.

If the individual concerned has been working with Early Years children, a referral will also be made to Ofsted.

Signed: **Clare Strickland**
Position: Head

Sarah Brown
HR Governor

Revised: April 2023
Review Date: April 2024