



Oakhyrst Grange School

Safer Recruitment Policy

Date Reviewed:	September 2025
Next Review Date:	September 2026
Policy Owner:	Mrs Gemma Mitchell
Ratified @ FGB & Date:	FGB 14.10.2024

Mission Statement

We are committed to providing a supportive, enjoyable and family style environment in which every child is nurtured and encouraged to achieve their potential through a broad-based curriculum and opportunities for developing sporting, dramatic, artistic and musical talents.

Statement of Aims & Objectives

- To enable each child to fulfil their own academic and personal potential.
- To instil in every child the importance of developing personal initiative and to foster in them a belief that they can fulfil their potential in any area of school life.
- To provide a broad based academic and extra-curricular education that is delivered in such a way as to satisfy the learning needs of each and every pupil.
- To help each pupil to develop both a set of Christian values and an understanding and appreciation of other religious beliefs.
- To learn the difference between right and wrong and to appreciate that rights and responsibilities are equally balanced.
- To develop and promote a sense of caring and community between the pupils within the school and the wider community as a whole.
- To instil in each pupil a high degree of self-respect and respect for their fellow pupils, teachers and other adults.
- To prepare each child for the transition to the next stage of their education and to be able to take advantage of any opportunities as they present themselves.



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Safeguarding

Oakhurst Grange School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. At this school we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe that every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Oakhurst Grange School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all of our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. This should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

All staff will be asked to complete training annually following KCSIE updates. Further safeguard training will take place throughout the year. All staff must wear their lanyards at all times.

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Introduction

This policy sets out our approach to the recruitment process. It includes information about job descriptions and employee specifications, assessment criteria, interviews and equality, diversity and inclusion.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Where the Headteacher considers there may be a potential conflict of interest the School may not interview or appoint existing parents of children attending the school at the time of advertising. This principle will apply to any full-time, part-time or temporary posts.

This policy is drawn up in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025), the School Staffing (England) Regulations, the Data Protection Act, and related guidance. It reflects the legal requirements for safer recruitment, including pre-appointment checks, regulated activity definitions, overseas checks, and maintenance of the Single Central Record.

Elements of safer practice

Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the process. It starts by planning the recruitment exercise and requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants. Safer practice continues beyond recruitment and requires everyone to be vigilant to maintain an environment which deters and prevents abuse and challenges inappropriate behaviour.

Employees and Governors involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers are responsible for reading and complying with this policy.

At least one member of every recruitment panel must have completed accredited safer recruitment training as required by KCSIE 2025.

Main elements of the recruitment process

The main elements of the recruitment process include but are not limited to the following:

- ensuring that advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications refer to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children; the safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role; our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children; and whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and relevant Exemptions Order.
- advertisements should also refer to the need for the successful applicant to undertake the relevant safer recruitment pre-employment checks, as well as the usual details of the post, salary, qualifications required, etc.;
- including a specific reference to suitability to work with children in the person specification;
- where the role involves engaging in regulated activity, a clear statement to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children;



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- requesting applicants who are shortlisted to complete a self-declaration of any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children;
- obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants to determine their suitability and taking up and resolving any discrepancies, anomalies and gaps in employment history;
- obtaining independent professional references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and following up any concerns, having regard to KCSIE guidance on references;
- a face to face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as their suitability for the post; and
- conducting all pre-employment checks, as required and detailed below.

All pre-appointment and vetting checks must be satisfactorily completed *before* the person begins regulated activity or substantive employment, unless in exceptional circumstances documented in writing and with appropriate supervision (as per KCSIE).

Assessment criteria

We always aim to recruit the person who is most suited to each particular job. We recruit solely on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the predetermined criteria for the job. Qualifications, experience and skills are assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.

Job descriptions and employee specifications

Before initiating the recruitment process, the responsible individual must ensure that there is an up-to-date job description for the role and a clear employee specification.

The job description will describe the duties, responsibilities, level of seniority associated with the role and pay and benefits, while the employee specification will describe the type of qualifications, training, knowledge, experience, skills, aptitudes, competencies and personal qualities required for effective performance of the job.

Advertisement of vacancies

It is our policy that all vacancies will be advertised internally, including through our internal mailing systems and displayed on noticeboards throughout our premises. The Senior Leadership Team should encourage existing employees to apply for vacant posts if they have the appropriate qualifications, experience and skills.

For jobs we intend to advertise externally, the Headteacher will put together the advertisement. External adverts will be placed on the School website and may also be advertised through other media.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to applying our equity, diversity and inclusion policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. We always carry out shortlisting, interviewing and selection without regard to an applicant's sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, skin colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave or trade union membership.

We will never exclude any candidate with a disability unless it is clear that the candidate is unable to perform a duty that is intrinsic to the role, having taken into account reasonable adjustments.



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Individuals involved with recruitment must only ask a candidate questions about their health where this is directly necessary for a particular role and, in any event, only once they have been shortlisted.

To prevent any candidate from being disadvantaged because of a disability, the individual responsible for communicating with applicants should ask each candidate whether they require reasonable adjustments to be made.

Application Form

All applicants need to complete our application form in full. CV's will not be accepted.

Shortlisting

All applications will be considered by at least two appropriate senior members of staff to ensure that:

- they are fully and properly completed;
- the information provided is consistent;
- the information provided does not contain any discrepancies or inconsistencies;
- any gaps in employment are identified; and
- any potential concerns are identified and explored.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted and may be returned for completion.

As well as reasons for gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work, will also be noted and will need to be explored and verified during the later stages of the process.

All candidates will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification and a short-list will be drawn up.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, and will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that the information they have provided is true. The purpose of a self-declaration is so that candidates will have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. At least two references will be sought directly from referees for all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates.

Wherever possible, these will be obtained before the interview so that any issues of concern can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the applicant has previously worked or volunteered with children, one reference must be from the most recent employer or organisation.



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References should always be requested directly from the referee and from a senior person with appropriate authority, not just a colleague.

Upon receipt, references should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. Verbal contact is to be made with the referee who is the current or most recent employer to confirm that their reference is authentic and to clarify any points in the reference that are vague or unspecific. Where there are vague or unspecific points in other references then these should also be verbally checked. In the case of volunteers then a verbal check should be made with at least one referee.

In relation to support staff roles, references will be sought prior to interview, where possible.

All information should be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and their previous employment by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the applicant on the form. Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the applicant at the interview.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

Other Checks before Interview

If a short-listed applicant claims to have a specific qualification or previous experience that is particularly relevant to the post for which they are applying that will not be verified by a reference, it is good practice to verify the facts before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview. The qualification or experience can usually be verified quickly by telephoning the relevant previous employer and asking for written confirmation of the qualification and/or experience.

Online searches will be carried out on shortlisted candidates as part of the safer recruitment due diligence process.

Shortlisted candidates will be notified that they will be subject to an online check and that anything of concern will be discussed with them during interview. An online check will consist of a search on the candidate's name, location and current employer, and may include social media platforms.

If incidents or issues that are publicly available online in relation to the shortlisted candidate are identified, this may be explored with the applicant at interview. Information relating to the online checks will only be passed to the interview panel if the searches yield information that needs to be explored further with the candidate during interview.

The school must also check whether any applicant is subject to sanctions from professional regulating bodies (where applicable).

For overseas applicants, obtain criminal records check from country(ies) where the applicant has lived; ensure these are equivalent and appropriately verified. If this is not possible, document the steps taken and any reasonable mitigations, and ensure references address any concerns.



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Invite to interview and assessment

Where an applicant has provided an email address the invitation to attend interview will be sent by email, and where an applicant has indicated that they are not able to access email a letter will be sent. Interview invites will always contain the following:

- Date, time/s and venue for interview and assessment
- Directions to the venue
- The names and positions of panel members / assessors
- An outline of what to expect and details of any preparatory work that may need to be undertaken
- A request that a named person is notified within a specified timescale if the candidate requires any reasonable adjustments to be made, to enable them to attend and fully participate in the interview and assessment process
- A Disclosure of Criminal Record Form, to be completed, sealed in an envelope marked private and confidential and brought to interview
- A request that the following documents are brought to interview
- Original copies of qualifications declared as part of the application
- Two of the following: Birth Certificate, valid Passport or Driving Licence; and
- A recent utilities bill or other form of verification of current address

Interview Panel

A panel of at least two but normally three people will conduct the interview. This allows at least one member to observe and assess the candidate and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other panel members. At least one member of the panel must have received accredited training in Safer Recruitment.

Interviews

The interview process will assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and person specification. All interviewers should receive copies of the full application form, letter of application and any available written references for each candidate prior to interview.

A list of questions and matters to explore at interview should be created for each candidate prior to interview. This list will not be exhaustive. Assessment sheets may be used and questions relating to safeguarding and child protection will be asked.

In addition, the interview panel should also explore:

- the candidate's attitude towards, and motivation for working with, children;
- Their ability to support the school's ethos which naturally encompasses safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- gaps in the candidate's employment history or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently;
- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee and/or from online checks; and
- if the candidate wishes to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS check.



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If references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate should be asked at the interview if there is anything they wish to declare/discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to their referees.

A meeting will be held post interview to discuss the candidate's suitability for the role.

All interview records will be held securely and for six months' post interview, all information for unsuccessful candidates will be confidentially disposed of.

Observing short-listed candidates' interaction with pupils is part of the interviewing process for teaching posts and procedures will vary according to the vacancy.

Conditional offers of employment / engagement and pre-employment checks

All offers of employment / engagement are conditional and are subject to:

- Verification of identity using photo ID and proof of address
- Verification of right to work in the UK
- Overseas checks where required (including but not limited to criminal records checks for overseas applicants and a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority (this is often the Department/Ministry of Education but varies across the world) in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach). Overseas checks include checking for sanctions, teaching bans, regulatory or disciplinary bodies in country(ies) concerned, where relevant.

As a minimum, overseas checks will be undertaken in respect of any person that has been in a country outside of the UK for a period of 3 months or more during the last five years, and additional checks required at the School's discretion.

- Verification of mental and physical fitness to carry out the role

This is ascertained via a request that the applicant confirm that they are fit to work in the applied role, and where required a medical examination carried out by the School's Occupational Health provider.

- Confirmation of a satisfactory Online Profile report

This is obtained by the services of an independent Online Profile Check through SP Index. (current provider)

- The receipt of at least two references which are satisfactory to the School.

The School reserves the right to request further or alternative references from applicants in order to verify their suitability for employment.

- Verification of qualifications including Qualified Teacher Status and completion of statutory induction where required
- Barred List and Enhanced DBS Clearance



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Once received by the applicant, the original DBS certificate must be shown to one of the designated persons at the relevant school. In the event that a DBS certificate contains information, this will be managed in accordance with the School's Suitability Policy and Policy on the secure handling of information provided by the DBS, and a positive DBS risk assessment carried out using the School's pro forma.

Where required for the role:

- A disqualification check
- A prohibition from teaching check.
- A Section 128 check

Any failure to meet the conditions specified will result in an offer of employment /engagement being withdrawn.

If any candidate is found to be prohibited or disqualified from working with children and young people, to have provided false information or where serious concerns arise, the School will comply with its obligations to report these matters to the Police and DBS as required.

Information regarding pre-employment checks will be recorded on the relevant school's Single Central Record, and copies of documents retained on the individual's personnel file in accordance with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Delays in obtaining Criminal Record Disclosure or Overseas Checks

In wholly exceptional circumstances as determined by the Headteacher, a prospective employee or worker may be allowed to commence work prior to satisfactory Criminal Record Disclosure and/or relevant overseas checks having been received.

No prospective employee or worker will be allowed to commence work before ALL other pre-employment checks have been completed, and where it is identified that a prospective employee or worker will commence work prior to the above:

A risk assessment must be undertaken and the prospective employee or worker must be appropriately supervised at all times.

This is only permitted where allowed under KCSIE 2025; there must be written, documented risk assessment, and a record kept of the supervision arrangements. The school must also ensure that this is not in regulated activity until all required checks are in place.

Induction and probation

On-going vigilance and training is critical to establishing a robust safeguarding culture. There is an induction programme for all teaching and non-teaching staff appointed to the School regardless of previous experience, which includes online and face to face child protection training and assessment. The purpose of induction is to:

Provide training and information about the School's policies and procedures including those in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people.

Establish clear expectations regarding the standards of conduct, behaviour and performance required.



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Ensure staff know when and how to raise any safeguarding concerns, including low level concerns.

Facilitate the identification of any concerns regarding conduct, behaviour or performance, and enable support to be provided to achieve the standards required

Provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues or concerns they may have regarding their role or responsibilities.

Induction training must include: safeguarding & child protection, online safety (including filtering & monitoring expectations), staff behaviour code, the whistle-blowing policy, low-level concerns policy, and regular refreshers as per KCSIE 2025.

Data protection

We process all personal data collected during the recruitment process in accordance with our Data Protection policy.

We do not collect unnecessary personal data from applicants during the recruitment process. For example, we will only request bank account details and next-of-kin contact details from successful applicants. Data collected as part of the recruitment process is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the recruitment exercise effectively to decide to whom to offer the job. Staff should report immediately any inappropriate access or disclosure of job applicant data in accordance with the School's Data Protection policy. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the School's Disciplinary policy.



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Appendix

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him/her from employment within the School. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or the DBS if:

- The School receives an application from a disqualified person;
- Is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or
- The School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question.
- The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed.
- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred.
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and
- The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving.

This Policy is subject to regular review.