

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Issued by:	Head of Human Resources
Last review:	5 November 2021
Next review due:	5 November 2024
Most recent edit:	5 November 2021
Circulation: (please highlight relevant circulation)	Staff Governing Council Website

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to employees of Benenden School (Kent) Limited and its subsidiaries (collectively 'Benenden' or 'the School')

References:

- ISI Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements September 2021
- DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', September 2021:
[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

Statement of Intent

Benenden School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The recruitment of all employees and volunteers (including those on a permanent and/or temporary basis) must comply with the Government's statutory guidance which includes "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (September 2021), the Children Act 1989, updated 2004, The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The school takes very seriously its duty of care for all pupils. In order to help safeguard and promote the welfare of all its pupils, the school is committed to a thorough and consistent Safer Recruitment Policy.

Purpose

The aim of the Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

Recruitment and vetting checks

Recruitment Process

Advertising: Vacant posts will normally be advertised externally and will always be advertised internally. Adverts must be organised by the relevant SMT member and by the Head of Department. The School's safeguarding statement is included in all job advertisements. The HR department will check all adverts to ensure they comply with employment and school's legislation including KCSIE and ISI, before being placed.

Recruitment Team: When a position becomes vacant a Recruitment Team will be formed, which will undertake procedures to ensure a safe and successful appointment. At least one member of the team must have undertaken safer recruitment training.

Application Form: The application form plays an important part of the school's selection process and all applicants should complete it in full. A Curriculum Vitae may not be accepted. The application form requires the applicant's:

- full name;
- any previous name;
- right to work in the UK;
- full education and qualifications, employment, voluntary and other history to the month and year. Reasons for leaving all previous posts are requested;
- details of two referees which must include the current or most recent employer and the most recent place the candidate worked with children (if applicable);

Candidates are required to disclose an offence in line with current school's legislation. The candidate must provide detail of the offence to the Head of HR who will only disclose this to the Headmistress and / or Director of Finance and Operations.

Applications, minus any disclosure, are made available to the shortlisting panel via the recruitment tile on the portal.

Job Description and Person Specification: This contains the school's safeguarding statement. The job description lists the main responsibilities and duties of the position, which the successful applicant will undertake. The person specification describes the skills, experience and qualifications the school is looking for.

Shortlisting: All application forms received will be carefully read and considered independently by a minimum of two persons from the Recruitment Selection Panel. An initial shortlist is drawn up which is given to the HR department.

The panel will then hold an initial remote shortlisting meeting with each candidate to provide the final shortlist.

The School will shortlist applicants according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role.

Shortlisted candidates will be required to complete and return the personal declaration for safeguarding children prior to their interview.

Interview: Shortlisted applicants are invited to attend a formal interview at which their relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

Formal interviews will have a panel of at least two people chaired by the Headmistress or Director of Finance and Operations or another designated senior member of staff. The Chair of Governors should chair the panel for the Headmistress's and Director of Finance and Operations appointments. The interviewers involved will be required to state any prior personal relationship or knowledge of any of the candidates and a judgement will be made by the Chair as to whether or not an interviewer should withdraw from the panel. Should the Chair have a conflict of interest, the Vice Chair shall decide whether the Chair should withdraw from the panel.

Interviews for the Domestic Department will be held by the Domestic Bursar and HR, unless for a management role in which case the process for all other candidates above will be followed.

HR will complete the safeguarding and compliance interview (unless delegated to a member of staff who has also undertaken safer recruitment training) which includes any gaps in education / employment. The Head of HR will question the detail of any disclosure made. Full notes of interview should be made for all appointments, signed and dated and returned to the HR department.

Attending Interview: Candidates who are invited to interview are asked if they require any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview. HR will arrange this if requested.

Equal Opportunities: Benenden School promotes employment practice designed to eliminate discrimination. Therefore, our aim is:

- To ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

- All job applicants will be treated equally and fairly in the recruitment process as stated in this policy.
- The successful applicant will be recruited and trained on the basis of ability, experience and skill to undertake the job successfully as defined within the job description and person specification.

Identity Checks: The School requests candidates invited to interview to bring the following original documents with them, which will be checked for validity and photocopied, normally by the HR department.

1. Current passport or current driving licence including a photograph;
2. Birth certificate (or current driving licence including a photograph if not above);
3. Documents proving National Insurance (NI) number and birth certificate must be provided if they do not have a passport;
4. Proof of current address showing the candidate's current name;
5. Where appropriate any documentation evidencing a change of name (e.g., marriage certificate; adoption certificate or deed poll);
6. Proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK;
7. Any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post (e.g., certificates, diplomas etc.). Where originals are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained by the candidate from the awarding body.

Please note that the above must be original documents. Photocopies or certified copies are not sufficient.

Vetting checks: In accordance with DfE requirements, a “single central record” of all staff is maintained by HR and requires the following items to be obtained/provided:

- ID Checks, including Proof of Right to Work in the UK as listed above;
- Enhanced DBS Disclosure;
- Barred List check;
- References;
- Full education and employment history;
- Medical Fitness Assessment;
- Check on Professional Qualifications including letter of professional standing for overseas qualifications (where relevant);
- Overseas Police Checks (where relevant);
- Prohibition from Teaching Check;
- Prohibition from Management Check;
- Radicalisation Check.

Any member of staff who is found to have engaged an employee without having complied with these requirements will be subject to disciplinary action.

Identity Checks: All successful applicants must bring to their interview proof of identity. Acceptable proofs of identity may include birth certificate, driving licence or passport combined with evidence of proof of address and NI. Applicants who are unable to bring these to interview must do so before taking up appointment.

References: Two professional references must be provided. These references should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee, where possible in writing, and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support the appointment decision. Where possible references will always be sought prior to the main interview. Any discrepancies or anomalies obtained

via reference must be followed up. Direct contact by telephone is required with each referee to verify the reference.

The School will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the application form. Any inconsistencies must be discussed with the candidate.

Previous Employment History: Complete information about previous employment must be provided along with satisfactory explanations for any gaps in employment. The HR Department will contact applicants directly in the event that there are employment gaps on the application form.

DBS Disclosure: An enhanced DBS disclosure is required for all new appointments to the school and must be obtained prior to appointment. Individuals will be asked to declare any convictions, cautions or reprimands, warnings or bind-overs that may have been incurred. Applicants and employees wishing to recruit should be aware that it takes, on average, 2 to 6 weeks to complete a Disclosure check.

Qualification Requirements: Candidates must demonstrate they have obtained any academic or vocational qualifications legally required for the post and/or declared in their application. Applicants will be asked to provide these when attending interview. Applicants who are unable to bring these to interview must do so before taking up appointment.

Where professional qualifications are taken in the European Economic Area, a letter of professional standing must be provided where relevant from countries which provide this.

Overseas Checks: All new appointments where persons have lived outside the UK during the last 10 years are subject to additional checks as deemed necessary. The Human Resources department will liaise directly with individuals to discuss what additional checks maybe necessary. Please note it is the responsibility of the individual to obtain and provide the information as required.

Medical Fitness: Once a conditional offer of employment has been made the school will require all successful staff to complete a medical questionnaire and declaration and, where there is a concern which is above the school's medical understanding, have an Occupational Health medical prior to taking up the post.

Prohibition from Teaching and Prohibition from Management Checks: Anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching. For those engaged in management roles and in the position of governor, an additional check is required to ensure they are not prohibited under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Radicalisation Check: The School has a legal duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This is known as the Prevent duty. Schools are required to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. Accordingly, as part of the recruitment process, when an offer is made the offer will be subject to a Prevent duty risk assessment [more guidance for schools from the DfE on this can be found at: [LINK](#)]

Conditional Offer of Appointment: A conditional contract of employment will be issued. The offer letter will confirm employment is subject to:

- Satisfactory references;
- Relevant DBS check;
- Medical fitness for the intended role;
- Receipt of all information required for the Single Central Register.

Criminal Records Policy: The School will refer to the Department for Education ("DfE") document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and any amended version in carrying out the necessary required Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

The School complies with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice, a copy of which may be obtained on request or accessed here: [DBS Code of Practice](#)

Disclosure and Barring Service Update Service: Where an applicant subscribes to the DBS Update Service the applicant must provide the original DBS and give written consent to the school to make the required online check, which will show whether there have been changes to the disclosure status since the issue of a disclosure certificate.

If disclosure is delayed: A short period of work is allowed under controlled conditions, at the discretion of the Headmistress. If an enhanced disclosure is delayed, the Headmistress may allow the member of staff to commence work:

- Without confirming the appointment;
- After a satisfactory check of the barred list if the person will be working in regulated activity
- All other relevant checks (including any appropriate prohibition checks) have been satisfactorily completed;
- Provided that the DBS application has been made in advance;
- With appropriate safeguards taken (for example under supervision);
- Safeguards reviewed at least every two weeks by the Head of HR, member of staff and their Line Manager and referred to the Headmistress / Director of Finance and Operations as necessary;
- The person in question is informed what these safeguards are and has signed the supervision agreements along with their Line Manager and relevant Senior Management Team member;
- Safeguarding training is provided; and,
- A note is added to the single central register with evidence of the measures put in place held on the person's file.

Retention and Security of Records: The School will comply with its obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under its Data Protection Policy. Copies of DBS certificates will not be retained for longer than 6 months.

Boarding Houses:

Boarding House inhabitants, spouses, partners and children over the age of 16 who live within a boarding house must have an Enhanced DBS check. In addition, all adults and children over the age of 16 must sign a copy of the Living in Boarding Accommodation Agreement, which will be provided by the Director of Finance and Operations, to confirm that they will comply with this in full.

Existing Staff: Staff currently employed by the school but appointed to a new post, do not require a new enhanced DBS check if their new role has increased pastoral responsibility unless there is any cause for concern. However, references will be taken and an interview held.

Child Protection: All staff must understand and commit to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children when carrying out their duties. All new staff will be issued with a copy of the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education document, the School's Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection leaflet. New staff must sign to state they have read and understood these documents. Staff must undertake Child Protection training as part of their induction. Child Protection training sessions will be held regularly within the school, for all staff and regular safeguarding and child protection updates issued, as required but at least annually.

Supply Staff: All staff under this category will be recruited in line with the [Supervision of Ancillary Staff, Suppliers and Contractors working in Boarding Houses](#)

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 Disclosure and Barring Service.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the Disclosure and Barring Service of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence.

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. The School will report the matter to the Police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service 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;
- 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 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.

JCC September 2021