



Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures

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Policy Lead: Head
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SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Application and Recruitment Process

Explanatory Note

Cokethorpe School ("the School") is committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the children and young people in its care. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

The School aims to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

This policy complies with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and associated statutory guidance. All queries on the School's Application Form and recruitment process must be directed to Dr Sarah Squire, Head.

Scope of this Policy

The Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures Policy and Procedure herewith refers and applies to staff directly recruited and employed by the School. In the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, staff are defined as:

Any person working at the School whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract, but does not include supply staff or a volunteer.

This policy also applies to staff conduct outside school hours/off-site/online, as these behaviours may affect suitability under KCSIE. The School recognises that a person's conduct outside school, including online or digital conduct, may indicate unsuitability to work with children. The School will consider such conduct (including any public statements, posts, content generation, or involvement in digital harms) when assessing candidates' suitability under our recruitment processes.

In the case of agency, contract workers, external tutors, alternative provision or third-party services, the School shall obtain written confirmation from the agency or company that it has carried out the appropriate checks. The School conducts identity checks on agency, contract workers, alternative provision providers, external tutors or third-party services on arrival in School and, in the case of agency workers which includes supply staff, the School must be provided with a copy of the DBS check for such staff.

The School will check with the relevant supply agency that the required checks have been carried out (identity, enhanced disclosure – renewed every 3 years, right to work in the UK, barred list, prohibition, qualifications, overseas checks plus in line with KCSIE two references, declaration of medical fitness, check of previous employment history). The Single Central Register shows these checks have been made and the School carries out its own identity check and has seen a copy of the disclosure (whether or not it discloses any information).

Certain individuals are automatically disqualified from acting in senior management positions within a charity. Whether an individual falls into the category of a senior management position is judged using the following criteria:

- A person who is accountable only to the Governors and who carries overall responsibility for the day-to-day management and control of the charity. At School this would be the Head.
- A person who is accountable only to the Head or the Governors and who is responsible for the overall management and control of the charity's finances. At School this would be the Bursar.

Being disqualified means that a person cannot take on, or stay in, a senior manager position – even on an interim basis, unless the Charity Commission has removed (or 'waived') the disqualification.

In respect of contractors, unchecked contractors will under no circumstances be allowed to work unsupervised in School. The School will determine the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances.

Any staff who TUPE transfer into the School's staff will be required to undertake the statutory requirements with regard to safer recruitment checks.

If staff are transferred under TUPE (gap of three months or less and information complete) information will be passed to the new employer and a note made on the Single Central Register that details have been accepted under TUPE.

Application Form

Applications will only be accepted from candidates completing the relevant Application Form in full. CVs will not be accepted in substitution for completed Application Forms.

Candidates are advised that all posts in the School involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post. Applicants will receive a Job Description and Person Specification for the role applied for.

As the job for which the candidate is applying involves substantial opportunity for access to children, it is important that they provide us with legally accurate answers. Upfront disclosure of a criminal record may not debar them from appointment as we shall consider the nature of the offence, how long ago and at what age it was committed and any other relevant factors.

Shortlisted candidates are asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children and disclose any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings. 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.

The successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure Form from the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") for the post prior to the start of employment. Additionally, successful applicants are asked to notify the school immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children.

The School takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children is asked to notify the School immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings he/she may receive.

Failure to declare any convictions (that are not subject to DBS filtering) may disqualify a candidate for appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light subsequently.

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, prior to an offer being made the recruitment panel will consider the applicant's suitability subject to the School's Prevent duty. All staff will be required to promote fundamental British values and undergo Prevent training.

If a candidate is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, their current employer will be asked about disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young persons (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether they have been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and if so the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure.

If the candidate is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues. Where neither the candidate's current nor previous employment has involved working with children, the current employer will still be asked about the candidate's suitability to work with children. Where there is no previous employment history, we may request character references which may include references from school or university.

The candidate is advised that the 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 DBS.

Invitation to Interview

Applicants will be short-listed according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. Short-listed applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 the School will ensure that at least one senior staff member on the interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.

The interview will be conducted in person (or in certain cases via Skype or Microsoft Teams) and the areas which it will explore will include suitability to work with children.

All candidates invited to interview must bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post (e.g. the original or certified copy of certificates, diplomas etc). Where originals or certified copies are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications will be obtained by the candidate from the awarding body.

All candidates invited to interview are asked also to bring with them:

ID documents on the list provided together with, where appropriate, any documentation evidencing a change of name.

Proof of their right to work in the UK.

Originals of the above are necessary. Photocopies or certified copies are not sufficient.

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview are asked to inform the School of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received)
- Verification of identity and qualifications including, where appropriate, evidence of the right to work in the UK
- A satisfactory enhanced DBS check and if appropriate, a check of the Barred List maintained by the DBS. It is rare that the School appoint members of staff prior to all recruitment checks being completed including viewing of DBS certificates. However, if a DBS disclosure is delayed but all other checks have been satisfactorily completed including the barred list, safeguarding measures will be put in place including a full risk assessment and supervisory order. All offers of employment are (and state) subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and recruitment checks
- For a candidate to be employed as a teacher, or any staff member whose role involves teaching, a check that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
- Verification of professional qualifications as appropriate
- Verification of successful completion of a statutory induction period (for teaching posts - applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999) where relevant

- Where the successful candidate has worked or been resident overseas, such checks and confirmations as the School may consider appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered including online/digital history from that country if feasible
- Satisfactory medical fitness
- Receipt of a signed Staff Suitability Declaration form showing that a candidate is not disqualified from providing childcare as set out in the statutory guidance “Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (July 2018)
- Full exploration and verification of any gaps identified in the employment history provided from a safeguarding perspective.
- If a candidate is undertaking a management role, a check that they have not been prohibited from participating in the management of independent schools (from 12 August 2015).

Low-Level Concerns

- All low-level concerns about staff or volunteers (i.e. concerns that do not meet the threshold for formal disciplinary procedure or referral) that arise during recruitment, induction, or subsequent employment must be recorded in a transparent and accessible low-level concerns log (maintained in accordance with the School’s Safeguarding Policy). This record will include date, summary of concern, actions taken and rationale for closure, and must be stored securely and made accessible to senior staff and/or the DSL.

It is the School's practice that successful candidates must complete health questionnaires (after offer of appointment). The information contained in the questionnaire will then be held by the School in the strictest confidence. The information is reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e. proposed workload, extra-curricular activities, layout of the School.

The School is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, considering medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

Online Checks

In addition to the other checks listed above, the School will undertake online and digital searches (e.g. social media, blogs, public AI-generated content) on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence. Candidates will be informed at the application stage that such checks may be carried out. The School will review not only traditional indicators but any evidence of involvement in misinformation, disinformation or conspiracy theories (or other digital conduct) that may call into question their suitability to work with children, in line with KCSIE.

The School will inform all candidates at the application stage that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks at the point of shortlisting

References

The School will seek the references referred to in the section above for shortlisted candidates and may approach previous employers for information to verify experience or qualifications, before interview. Candidates are asked to indicate on the application form if they do not wish us to take up references in advance of the interview. In line with external candidates, references will also be requested from appropriate senior staff, prior to interview, for existing staff applying for posts within the School.

All referees will be asked if the candidate is suitable to work with children. All referees will also be asked whether the candidate has ever been subject to investigations or concerns relating to their online or out-of-school conduct.

The School will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the application form. Any inconsistencies will be discussed with the candidate and the School may seek verification from the referee to verify that electronic references originate from a legitimate source.

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 DBS 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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>.

Retention, Record-Keeping and Low-Level Concern

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 and Privacy Notices.

All low-level concerns (i.e. those not meeting the threshold for formal disciplinary or safeguarding procedures) must be recorded, stored securely, and made available to the DSL.

Policy Statement on Safer Recruitment Procedures

Cokethorpe School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and this is reflected and embedded in its recruitment policy.

Principles:

- To ensure a transparent and unbiased recruitment and selection process is followed; one that results in the appointment of the best candidate, based solely on merit and best-fit with the School's values, ethos and culture. All job profiles provide a comprehensive statement that will help candidates to decide whether there is a good fit
- To comply with guidance outlined in the DfE (Department of Education) *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* and the ISI (Independent School Inspectorate) handbook of regulatory requirements
- To comply with the Equality Act 2010. The School selects all candidates for interview in a fair and proper manner according to their qualities, qualifications and experience
- To comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) – All data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and recorded and retained in accordance with legislation and the School Privacy Notices.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for all recruitment at Cokethorpe School lies with the Head for academic staff and the Bursar for support staff. The responsibility is delegated to the Head of HR in conjunction with Heads of Departments.

Resourcing/Planning/Advertising/Job Specification etc

- After consultation with the Head, the Head of HR will provide information on adverts, job descriptions/person specification and resourcing (location of advertising etc) for HOD to amend/update
- The Head of HR to provide information for the School website to the Communications Team regarding the application process etc
- All advertisements and job descriptions to include statement of commitment to safeguarding promoting welfare of children and need for checks and equal opportunities
- The Head of HR to liaise with HOD on interview schedule/dates, deadline etc
- Head/Bursar to approve

Selection/Interviewing/Referencing/ID

- The Head of HR to administer replies and provide confidential access of application forms to relevant senior staff, check application forms for gaps and request follow up at interview if necessary.

- After the deadline for applications, create shortlist, arrange interview schedule in conjunction with HOD, Head/Bursar and invite for interview
- All interview candidates to be asked to bring in original documents for ID and educational and professional qualification certificates to interview, Visa information if applicable. Request signature on application form if sent electronically. In the email invitation to interview, applicants are asked about any special requirements they may have in order to attend the interview.
- Send rejection letters to unsuccessful candidates
- Request References for shortlisted candidates
- Volunteers: Volunteers are approved by the Head and notified verbally to all staff in advance requesting any objections.
- Visiting Speakers: A nominated academic staff member will coordinate safeguarding checks for all external speakers with regard to ensuring that they are suitable and fall within the scope of the Prevent Duty by promoting British values. A log will be kept of all visits. This process is overseen by the Director of Co-curricular

Appointing/Offer Letters/Rejecting/Retention of Details

- After the decision. The Head/Bursar/Members of the SLT to ring with conditional (recruitment checks) offer of appointment.
- The Head of HR to prepare conditional offer letters and forms (medical and employee details) and rejection letters.
- Following acceptance, prepare contract pack for Head/Bursar approval (enclosures to include staff handbooks, safeguarding policy, privacy notices).
- References (if not obtained previously).
- Process DBS check (remotely or invite back in with documents).
- Keep unsuccessful application forms for a minimum of 3 months and no longer than a year in order to respond to any challenges.
- Enter all new employees on to Database/Central Register.
- Ensure that all documents are uploaded onto the new employees Every HR record as well as in their personnel file.
- File check list to be completed in full before file is stored.
- All personnel files to be stored in a secure and confidential manner.

Further Recruitment Checks

- Identity, Qualifications, permission to work in UK if not verified at interview
- Overseas checks if lived abroad within ten years
- DBS check
- Teachers and any staff member whose role involves teaching – Prohibition list
- Direction 128 (if applicable) for SLT, Governors and Heads of Department.
- Online searches

New Arrival Procedures/Induction/Safeguarding etc

- Notify Deputy Headmaster for training and Bursary for payroll
- All staff will complete an induction programme and the programme will include child protection and health and safety training by the Deputy Headmaster and online training links
- DBS Certificate to be viewed and recorded as seen on the SCR on or before first day of employment
- Current photograph for lanyard and Every HR staff record

Retention of Personnel Files (Refer to School's Privacy Notice)

- Record as leaver on Database/Central Register
- Archive personnel files of leavers
- Retain leaver files for seven years from termination date and destroy
- Retain interview notes and recruitment records for a minimum of three months but no more than 1 year from date of interview and destroy

- Adhere to GDPR retention guidelines

Include on vacancies section of the website, policies and forms:

- Application Forms
- Safeguarding
- Equal Opportunities, Staff
- Ex-Offenders policy
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
- Recruitment Application procedure explanatory note
- Staff/Recruitment Privacy Notice
- DBS Code of Practice.