



POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF

References:

- A. Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE guidance dated September 2021
- B. Working Together to Safeguard Children – DfE guidance dated September 2018.
- C. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE, September 2021.
- D. ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools, Commentary on The Regulatory Requirements, September 2020
- E. Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- F. The Equality Act 2010.

Introduction

The policy and procedures set out below have been revised in line with the DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which replaced Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education from April 2014. They are to be followed for the recruitment and selection of all employees and volunteers at Vinehall School.

The Headmaster is responsible for directing / overseeing the recruitment and selection of all teaching and administrative staff, while the Bursar is responsible for overseeing / directing the recruitment and selection of all Bursarial and Support Staff.

Policy Statement

Vinehall School is committed to creating a culture of safe recruitment and to adopting recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who may pose a risk to, abuse, or otherwise harm a child.

This policy has regard to the DfE guidance at References A and B and describes the checks that are required for any individual working in any capacity at, or visiting, the School. As a matter of policy, it is to be assumed that all staff employed at Vinehall School in whatever capacity, including volunteers, have the potential to work in 'regulated activity' and their employment is therefore subject to a successful enhanced DBS check with barred list information.

In addition to the DBS checks, anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work will require a further TRA check to ensure that they are not prohibited from teaching.

The DBS Check and Secretary of State Prohibition Orders

When the DBS has completed its check of an applicant's Police National Computer (PNC) record and whether or not they are on the barred list, the information will be recorded on the DBS certificate and sent to the applicant. The applicant must show the certificate to the Compliance Officer before they take up post or as soon as practicable afterwards. If, following a risk assessment, the School allows an individual to start work before the DBS certificate is available, the individual must be appropriately supervised at all times prior to the arrival of their DBS certificate. Where this occurs, a note to this effect will be included in the Single Central Register.

Note that if the School knows or has reason to believe that an individual is barred, it commits an offence if it allows the individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in any setting. A check of any prohibition can be carried out using the Employer Access Online Service (Teaching Regulation Authority website).

Pre-Appointment Checks

An offer of appointment, including to an applicant who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the following mandatory pre-employment checks. The school will:

- verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID, birth certificate and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available;
- obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity. (Note: as a matter of policy, this will apply to all Vinehall employees, including volunteers and GAP students).
- check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online service;
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (through the completion of a medical questionnaire and its assessment by the School Nurse);
- verify the person's right to work in UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, the School should follow advice on the GOV.UK website;
- obtain a police check from their previous country of residence if the person has lived or worked in a country outside the UK for a period of 3 months or more within the last 10 years;
- verify any professional qualifications that are a formal requirement of the job.

References and Employment History

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References should always be obtained, scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed. They should always be requested directly from the referee and 'open references', for example in the form of 'To Whom It May Concern' testimonials, should not be accepted.

Ideally, references should be sought on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.

On receipt, references should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate: for example, if the answers are vague. They should also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies should be taken up with the candidate.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post.

Applicants must provide a full history of employment in chronological order since leaving education, with start dates and end dates, and explanations for periods not in employment or education. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, it is

advisable to check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

Wherever possible, references are obtained prior to final interview. This is the established convention for teaching staff, though with non-teaching staff this can be more problematical as it is somewhat contrary to normal recruitment practice. If references cannot be obtained prior to final interview – usually at the request of the applicant who may not want their current employer to know they are considering leaving – they are always taken up and scrutinised before an offer of employment is confirmed.

Central Register of Appointments

The Bursar and the Finance & HR Officer are responsible for maintaining the Single Central Register of Appointments, covering all staff (including any supply staff) who work in the School; all others who work in regular contact with children in the School, including volunteers; and all members of the Governing Body, in accordance with the separate instructions pertaining to the Register.

Contractors

Vinehall employs its own staff for long-term support functions such as catering and cleaning, and these staff are all subject to the routine pre-employment checks.

Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken should be supervised on site if they will have contact with children. The identity of contractors should be checked on arrival at the School. Where the employees of contractors may be working at the school on a long-term basis, they will be subject to the same checks as school staff, with written confirmation supplied by the employing organisation. It is possible that contractors such as builders may have access to areas where unsupervised contact with children is possible. When and if this is the case, the school will ensure DBS checks have been undertaken by the contractor. Before such a person starts work, the school will obtain confirmation from the company that the required checks have been undertaken and check photographic identification on arrival at the school. The school will keep records of the confirmations from the contractor for evidence as required. If the school uses supply teaching agencies, it is on the basis of an undertaking from these agencies that appropriate pre-employment checks have been carried out.

If a contractor working on site is self-employed, consideration should be given to obtaining a DBS check for them, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account.

Volunteers

The school has a small group of volunteers, mostly parents, who visit the school on an occasional but regular basis to offer support for school activities. These volunteers do not have unsupervised access to children as the teaching staff are always present, but as a matter of best practice, all regular volunteers are subject to the same DBS checks as ordinary staff and a register of checks is kept in the Bursary.

Any one-off volunteers for school trips or one-off events/activities at the school would not be subject to DBS checks in advance. However, ID is checked and they would not have unsupervised access to our children (i.e. they would be accompanied by a staff member at all times) and would not undertake any kind of personal care or regulated activity.

Visitors

All visitors to the school will be supervised by a member of staff whilst on site if they have access to children.

Prior to the arrival of the visiting speaker, the school will undertake a Barred List check and will carry out an internet search on the speaker to verify their suitability. A risk assessment will be carried out and appropriate measures put in place. Visiting speakers will be required to provide photographic proof of identity on arrival at the school.

Chairman of Governors & other Governors

The required checks for all Governors are ID, DBS, right to work, overseas checks (if applicable) and prohibition from management.

The Chairman of Governors must also have an enhanced DBS check signed by the Secretary of State for Education.

Age Discrimination

Following the introduction of Reference E on 1 October 2006, it is unlawful to discriminate against job applicants (among others) either directly or indirectly on the basis of age.

Health-Related Questions

Section 60 of the Equality Act, which came into force on 1 October 2010, limits the circumstances in which employers can ask health-related questions **before** offering an individual a job. As a result, the Independent Schools Council's (ISC's) Legal Team advise that:

- details of past sickness and attendance records should no longer be sought from referees prior to interview;
- successful applicants are only sent a health questionnaire after being made a job offer;
- all job offers are made conditional upon receipt of a satisfactory medical questionnaire.
- schools do not seek past sickness records from referees until after making the conditional job offer.

These questions can be asked of applicants before appointment should they questions specifically relate to an intrinsic function of the work.

Procedures

The procedures and sequence of action are set out below:

Ser	PRE-INTERVIEW	Remarks
1	Departing Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation is required in writing when a member of staff is leaving • Discuss with that person the procedure for leaving (when to tell the children and staff, etc.) 	
2	Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine timetable for recruitment and selection • Draft Job Description and Person Profile • Job Description and Person Profile to be approved by Headmaster / Bursar respectively • Determine any other documents to be provided to applicants and review and update as necessary. 	Note: The Job Description and advertisement must be consistent with the policy on Equal Opportunities (e.g. avoid references to 'young' etc.)

Ser	PRE-INTERVIEW	Remarks
3	<p>Advertise Vacancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft advertisement, setting closing date for applications • Advertisement to include statement of the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and need for successful applicant to have a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. • Place advert(s) as appropriate (e.g. TES, IAPS, Battle and Rye Observer, Courier, Wealden Advertiser, Friday Ad) • Notify Bursar of costs of advertisements. 	See Doc 1
4	<p>Candidate Information Pack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send out, under covering letter (Doc 2): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Application Form (teaching staff: Doc 3A; Support Staff: Doc 3B; Administrative Staff: Doc 3C) ○ Explanatory Notes (Doc 4) ○ Job Description (Doc 5) – including a statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post ○ Person Profile (Doc 5A) ○ Child Protection Policy Statement (Doc 15). 	<p>See Doc 2 and enclose Docs 3, 4, 5, 5A</p> <p>Job Description to make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.</p> <p>Person Profile to include specific reference to suitability to work with children.</p>
5	<p>Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinise all Application Forms on receipt, noting any discrepancies / anomalies / gaps in employment which must be explained in writing and explored if the applicant is considered for shortlisting • The reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment, without any clear career or salary progression, should be explored and verified • Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned for completion • Note that all staff who work directly with EYFS children are required to declare any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children; • Place all Applications into a central file. 	See Disclosure Form at Doc 15
6	<p>Shortlist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange a meeting to discuss applications against a check list (i.e. what are we looking for?) • All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the job 	

Ser	PRE-INTERVIEW	Remarks
	description and Person Profile without exception or variation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two people minimum to prepare Shortlist • Set date(s) for interviews. 	
7	Seek References <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send out reference requests for shortlisted candidates, using standard letter (Doc 7), enclosing questionnaire (Doc 8) and Job Description (Doc 5) and Person Profile (Doc 5A). • Note: one referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer. (Should an applicant request that a reference is not sought unless he / she is ultimately selected, this can be agreed but any resulting job offer must be made conditional on receipt of a satisfactory reference). 	See Doc 7, Doc 8, Doc 5 and Doc 5A
8	Check References <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. • Telephone the referee and ask him/her to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confirm that they actually provided the reference (Note: there have been instances of applicants forging references and this is a mandatory requirement for employees in boarding schools) ○ provide written answers or amplification as appropriate, where the reference is vague or unspecific • Check that the information provided by the referee about the applicant is consistent with the information provided by the applicant. Any discrepancy should be taken up with the applicant. • Do not rely on references or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. 'To Whom It May Concern', as these are easy to forge or might be the result of a compromise agreement and therefore unlikely to include any adverse comments. 	Note: where an applicant who is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children
9	Prepare the Interview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce programme for interview and tailor invitation letter (Doc 9) accordingly to advise applicants of any special requirements (e.g. teaching a lesson) • Involving pupils in the selection process in some way is common and recognised as good practice. For example, candidates for teaching posts might be observed in their interaction with pupils, asked to teach a lesson, or be shown around the school by pupils 	Deputy Head for teaching and admin staff. Bursar for Support Staff.

Ser	PRE-INTERVIEW	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve all relevant parties in interview process. Discuss questions to be asked to avoid overlap and produce list of questions for interview (Doc 10). 	
10	<p>Invitation to Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send out standard invitation letter, tailored as necessary • Inform interviewees with notes for teaching 	See Doc 9
11	<p>Interview Arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be at least 2 interviewers • Panel members should have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment and have met and agreed issues and questions / assessment criteria / standards • Panel members should be appropriately trained. With effect from the publication of Reference A in April 2014, it is mandatory for one member of interview panels to be trained in Safer Recruitment in Education and involved in all stages of the recruitment process. (The Headmaster, Bursar, Deputy Head and HR Officer are trained.) • All applicants are to be <i>treated equally</i>. This means that they must all be asked the <i>same set of initial questions</i> relating to the Job Description and Person Profile, with further discussion then resulting from the answers given • Avoid hypothetical questions, as they allow theoretical answers • It is better to ask competence-based questions that ask a candidate to relate how s/he has responded to, or dealt with, an actual situation, or questions that test a candidate's attitudes and understanding. 	See Doc 10

Ser	INTERVIEW	Remarks
12	<p>The Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As well as assessing the candidate's suitability for the post, the interview should explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ his/her suitability for work with children ○ his/her ability to support the School's agenda for keeping children safe in education ○ any gaps in employment history ○ any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate or referee. • The identity and qualifications of all candidates should be verified on day of interview by scrutiny of appropriate original documents and 	

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	<p>copies of documents should be taken and placed on the applicant's personal file.</p> <p>Note: if a candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.</p>	
13	<p>Record Keeping of the Interview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes from all interviewers, together with copies of Application Forms, will need to be <i>placed together</i> so that all data is held in one place only • Any notes should be kept for <i>four months</i>, in case of queries, after which they should be destroyed as confidential waste – other than those for the successful candidate whose notes may be placed on file. 	
14	<p>Other Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the interview day, all academic applicants should meet the Headmaster and Deputy Head. They should also be made aware of the Staff Handbook • Headmaster to have up to date salary scale to hand • The Deputy Head will ask about home background during a tour of the School • The applicant may take a lesson, observed by the Head of Department, Deputy Head or the Headmaster • Candidates will be informed when they will know the outcome of the interview • At the end of the day, a meeting will be held with everyone who has met the candidate. 	
Ser	POST INTERVIEW	Remarks
15	<p>Conditional Offer of Appointment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once interviews have been completed and a selection made, the Headmaster will offer the post in writing, conditional upon meeting the requirements of the pre-employment checks, and invite the candidate to confirm their acceptance in writing: • The Headmaster will produce a draft offer letter setting out the key terms and conditions associated with the post, including the above conditions, and circulate it to the Bursar for comment. • Once finalised, the Headmaster's PA will issue the letter on behalf of the Headmaster and copy it to the Finance & HR Officer who will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Place it on the individual's personal file. 	<p>As soon as a selection has been made, the Finance & HR Officer will initiate an Appointment Record for the prospective employee, by making the appropriate entries on the school's MIS, in line with the separate instructions for the maintenance of the Central Register of Staff Appointments,</p>

Ser	INTERVIEW	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate the enhanced DBS clearance process. ● On receipt of acceptance, the Headmaster will inform all other applicants by phone or in writing, turning them down ● On receipt of a satisfactory DBS disclosure, references and medical questionnaire (see below), the Headmaster will send a welcome letter, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Confirmation of Mentor ○ Term dates (calendar) ○ Outline of current week (copy of current timetable) ○ Invitation to events / tour with own family ○ A request to visit again to meet with Mentor ○ Copy of induction programme ○ The Contract 	held by the Finance & HR Officer.
16	<p>Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre Employment Checks</p> <p>An offer of appointment should be conditional upon satisfactory completion of the following pre-appointment checks and a probationary period:</p>	
	<p>a. References. The receipt of at least two references that are satisfactory to the School (if not obtained and scrutinised previously).</p>	Required for all staff appointed since 1 September 2003
	<p>b. Identity. Verification of the candidate's identity (if that could not be verified immediately after the interview).</p>	By checking documents as per requirements for DBS check
	<p>c. Qualifications. Verification of the candidate's qualifications (if not verified on the day of interview). Candidates are required to produce original certificates of their qualifications. Copies are then to be taken and filed on their personal file.</p>	Required for all staff appointed since 1 September 2003
	<p>d. DBS – it is a legal requirement for all staff newly appointed on or after 1 May 2007, to have a satisfactory enhanced DBS Disclosure (which includes a List 99/barred list check). Check to be initiated by the Finance & HR Officer.</p> <p>Note: a separate check against the barred list must be undertaken in the event that an enhanced disclosure is not received in advance of a member of staff starting work. Likewise the member must be supervised at all times prior to the arrival of their new DBS check.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See Note 1 below. 2. The DBS check must be carried out either no more than three months before the start date or as soon as practicable after appointment. 3. The recruitment decision should only be confirmed after having seen a copy of the

Ser	INTERVIEW	Remarks
		applicant's DBS certificate.
	e. Overseas Police Checks. Applicants must obtain a satisfactory police check from the countries in which they have worked or lived abroad for a period of 3 months or more in the last 10 years.	Where a police check cannot be provided due to the country not issuing such checks, an additional reference will be taken, ideally from that country
	f. Prohibition Orders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A check of any prohibition must be carried out for all teaching staff. • A check of prohibition from management must be carried out for all those involved in the management of the school. This includes: All Governors, Headmaster, Deputy Headmaster, Bursar, All members of the SMT, all Heads of Department 	
	g. Declaration re Disqualification under Childcare Act 2006: Applicants must complete a Disqualification Declaration form declaring any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children	
	h. A satisfactory Medical Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headmaster's PA will write to the prospective employee asking him/her to complete the Medical Questionnaire (Doc 11) and return it direct to the School Nurse, in an enclosed SAE. • On receipt, the School Nurse will assess whether the candidate is medically and mentally fit for the job, based on the candidate's responses and inform the Headmaster accordingly • The School Nurse will also complete a medical fitness declaration (Doc 12) and pass it to the Bursar, to be entered on the school's MIS and retained on the individual's personal file • In some instances, the School Nurse may judge it necessary for the candidate to have a medical examination. In such cases, she will contact the candidate to make the necessary arrangements and send the physician's report (Doc 13) to the GP for completion. • Should there be any concerns about past sickness or attendance records, referees may be asked to comment <i>after</i> making the conditional job offer, but not before, by completing Doc 8A. 	Doc 11 Doc 12 Doc 13 Concerns over past sickness records – Doc 8A
17	Note: all checks should be:	

Ser	INTERVIEW	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • documented and retained on the individual's personal file (except for the DBS certificate which should be recorded as seen) • entered on the school's MIS as part of the Single Central Register maintained by the Finance & HR Officer. • followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided. 	
18	<p>Where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the candidate is found to be on List 99/DBS Children's Barred List, or the DBS Disclosure shows he/she has been disqualified from working with children • an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his/her application • there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children, <p>the facts must be reported to the police and / or the DBS at: PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA (tel: 01325 953 795)</p>	
19	<p>The Headmaster will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform staff in the Staff Meeting. • Inform parents in the next letter. 	
20	<p>The Deputy Head will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise farewells for leaving staff (including cheque and card) • Act as (or oversee) the Mentor for new staff. 	
21	<p>On arrival of new appointee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bursar obtains a P45 from the employee's previous employer • The Finance & HR Officer checks the completion of the employee's record on the Central Register of Staff Appointments (Note 4). 	See Note 4 below
22	<p>Post Appointment Induction An induction programme should be drawn up for newly appointed members of staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training and information about the School's policies and procedures • Provide Safeguarding training • Support individuals in the role for which they have been engaged • Provide opportunities for them to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities. <p>The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role but, as far as safeguarding</p>	Arranged by the Deputy Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Ser	INTERVIEW	Remarks
	<p>and promoting the welfare of children is concerned, the programme should include information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies and procedures in the Staff Handbook in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection and safeguarding children, anti-bullying, online safety • Safe practices and standards of conduct • How and with whom any concerns should be raised • Other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability, whistleblowing. 	

Note:

1. The CRB (the pre-cursor to DBS) check was introduced in April 2002 and includes:

- An automatic search of the PNC. This would reveal if a person had been convicted, cautioned, reprimanded or given a warning for a criminal offence, including those that relate to sexual offences/cautions.
- If the position for which the DBS check is required involves working with children the DBS also checks List 99 and the DBS Children's Barred List.

2. It is mandatory to obtain a DBS check on all staff and governors, employed since April 2002. (Note: A previous check may be accepted (at the employer's risk) if the subject gives written consent. 'Disclosure' information must be kept secure and destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed. However, the details must be kept: date of 'disclosure'; who obtained it; level of 'disclosure'; unique reference number. A 'disclosure' must not be accepted if there is a gap of employment of 3 months or more). There is, however, no requirement to obtain a DBS check on existing staff or governors in education. (Note: prior to Apr 02, all Vinehall staff were subject to a List 99 check).

3. The enhanced DBS check for the Chairman of Governors must be countersigned by the Secretary of State and must therefore be initiated through the DfE. For the detailed instructions, see Reference D, Part 4.

4. Central Register. With effect from 1 May 2007, a Single Central Register of recruitment and vetting checks is to be maintained by the Compliance & HR Officer for all members of staff. The register must show the date on which each check was carried out and indicate who carried out the check.

Sample Documents:

1. Advertisement.
2. Letter to Applicant.
3. Application Form.
4. Explanatory Notes.
5. Job Description.
- 5A. Teacher Profile.
6. (No longer required)
7. Letter to Referee.
8. Reference Form.
9. Invitation to Interview.
10. Interview Questions.
11. Medical Questionnaire.
12. Medical Certificate.

13. Physician's Report.
14. Child Protection Policy Statement.
15. EYFS Disclosure Form.

Related Documents:

- A. A6 – Safeguarding Policy.
- B. A1 - Equal Opportunities Policy (Staff).
- C. A17 - Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.
- D. A17 – Whistleblowing Policy.
- E. A2 – Disability and Accessibility Policy.
- F. A6 – Safeguarding Policies.
- G. A13 - Central Register of Staff Appointments (held by the Finance & HR Officer).