

Prenton Preparatory School

Safer Recruitment Policy

Aims

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in education.

Prenton Preparatory School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

This school recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities.

The school is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the school is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity.

The school will uphold its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles set down in the school's Equality Opportunities Policy.

All posts within school are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bindovers, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

The school is committed to ensuring people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position.

The school will:

- ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have received safer recruitment training and successfully completed the safer recruitment training assessment
- work towards every appointment panel to include one member who has received safer recruitment training
- implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role
- keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DFE requirements
- ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure. The school will monitor the compliance with these measures.
- require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the school to notify the school, in writing of the offence and the penalty.

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken:

The Proprietors and the School comply fully with Safer Recruitment systems and procedures in compliance with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations and the school's Staff Recruitment Policy.

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, is always conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

When appointing new staff, the following checks are completed:

- verification of a candidate's identity, from birth certificate, current photographic ID and proof of address;

- obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity (unless exempt – see below);
- obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available (unless exempt – see below);
- check that the 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; (this includes prohibition from management if appropriate);
- verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then prospective employers, or volunteer managers, should follow advice on the GOV.UK website;
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, for three months or more in the last ten years, a DBS check is insufficient and further checks, including an EEA check, as considered appropriate will be made;
- verification of professional qualifications, as appropriate.

A DBS certificate must be obtained from the candidate before or as soon as practicable after appointment (except in the circumstances detailed below). Alternatively, if the applicant has subscribed to it and gives permission, the school or college may undertake an online update check through the DBS Update Service. Individuals can join the DBS Update Service when applying for a new DBS check; this will allow them to re-use this check when applying for similar jobs. With the individual's consent, their employer can go online and carry out a free, instant check to see if a new certificate is required: www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service.

There is **no requirement** to obtain an enhanced DBS check if, in the three months prior to beginning work in their new appointment, the applicant has worked:

- in a school in England in a post which brought them into regular contact with children or in any post in a school since 12 May 2006; or
- in a college in England in a position which involved the provision of education and regularly caring for, training, supervising

However a barred list check should still be conducted and school may request an enhanced DBS check with barred list information should there be concerns.

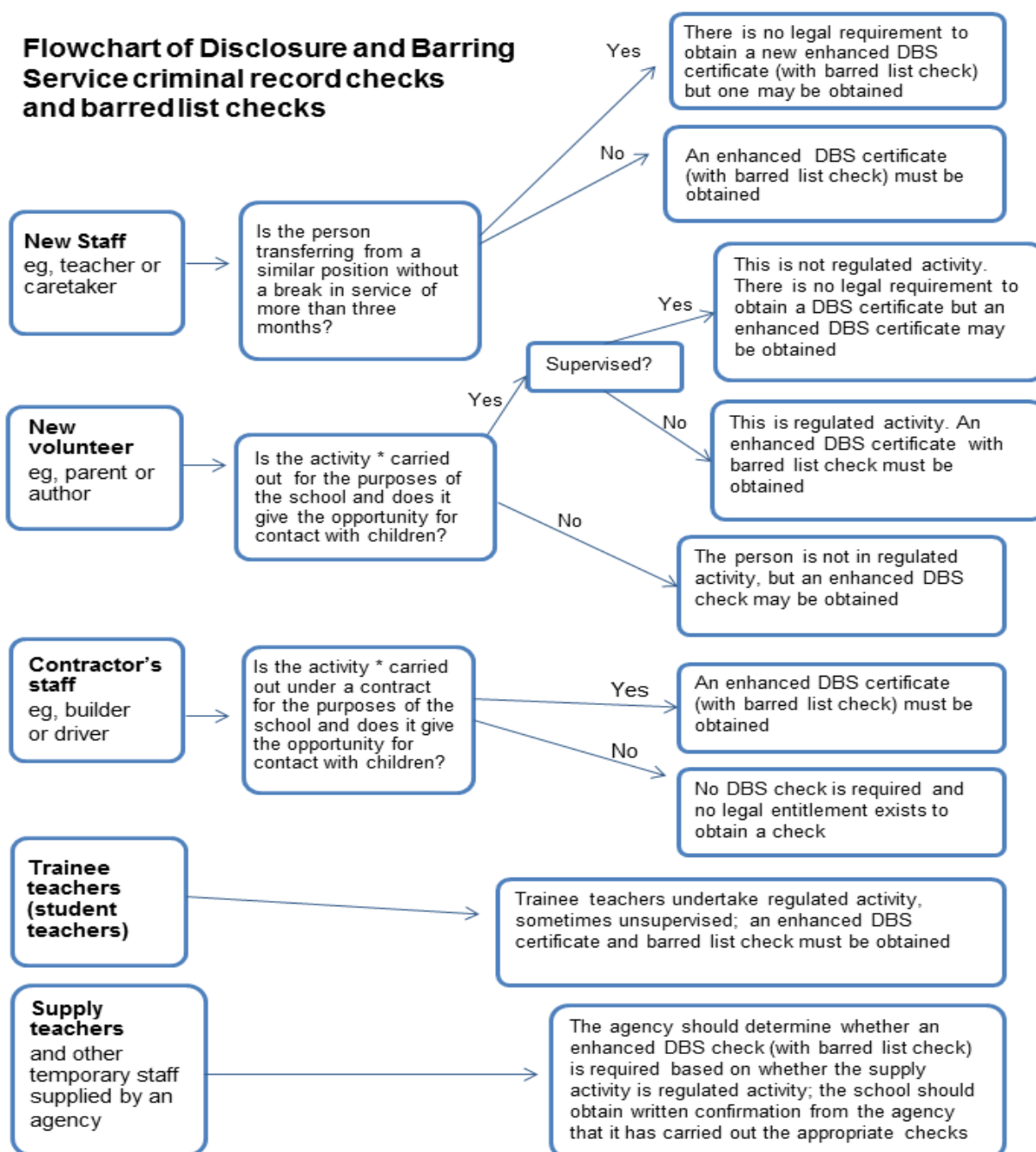
The school follows rigorous recruitment procedures to establish that adults are fit to work with children. These include a series of thorough checks made by the school on any potential employee: a minimum of two references are sought and one must be from the current or most recent employer, the PPS Application Form is required and any gaps in employment checked, further checks are used to confirm identity and medical checks statements are taken.

The Headteacher, Mr. M. T. R. Jones, has completed the NCSL training in safer recruitment and subsequently an EduCare qualification and his certificates are in the safeguarding file. All other members of the school's SMT have undertaken the Educare Safer Recruitment training. This qualification is renewed at least every 5 years.

Appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with pupils within the school or on another site, e.g. extra-curricular clubs.

See below for advice on when DBS Checks are required.

Flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checks and barred list checks



* Activities listed under the guidance's definition of regulated activity and which are carried out 'frequently'

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the proprietors to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements
- Monitor the school's compliance with them

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and other managers involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure Deal with the administration of the disclosure system for the school
- Maintain an up-to-date Single Central Record of all staff and volunteers at the school

The Proprietors have delegated responsibility to the Headteacher to lead in all appointments outside of the leadership group. The Proprietors will be involved in staff appointments but the process will be led by the Headteacher.

It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers to comply with this document.

It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safer recruitment pre-employment checks.

The Procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, normally this will entail an external advertisement. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate. Volunteers in school are also welcome to apply to internally advertised posts.

The school also works in partnership with various universities. Trainees in the final year of their teaching practice or on professional graduate programmes who are placed in the school via these universities are welcome to apply for any vacant positions.

Absences due to short and long term sickness are usually covered using school staff initially followed by supply agencies until it is known how long the member of staff is likely to be absent. Temporary positions will then be advertised for long term absence positions.

Applications:

The form

The school uses a standard application form (PPS Application Form). From January 2017 CVs have not been accepted.

The school requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police and other professional regulatory bodies (e.g. General Teaching Council for England).

References

Reference requests for shortlisted candidates will be sent immediately after shortlisting.

References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable.

The school will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable.

Reference requests will specifically ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.

Referees will also be asked to confirm details of:

- The applicant's current post, salary and attendance record
- Performance history and conduct
- Any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current
- Any disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired and the outcome of those details of any

allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns.

References will be compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant at interview. All references will be verified.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and which no further issues have been raised, are not likely to cause concern. More serious or recent concerns or issues are more likely to cause concern. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants

The school's policy is to require shortlisted applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all criminal convictions whether "spent" or "unspent" and include any cautions and pending prosecution. Such declarations will be made on an appropriate form and should be submitted in a sealed envelope, marked strictly private and confidential to the chair of the selection panel / Headteacher, prior to the interview. The chair of the panel / Headteacher will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at interview.

The disclosure of convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

All ex-offenders are dealt with in a fair, respectful manner and any decision not to appoint someone because of their conviction(s) will be clearly documented.

Interviews

The selection process will always include the following:

- Face to face interview / professional interview,
- Young people panel / activity
- Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status.
- Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents on the day of interview in line with those set out in The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. Similar information is also required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check on the preferred candidate.
- Short-listed candidates will also be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation on the day of interview. The school will verify that candidates have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the school will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where candidates have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check will also be required.
- Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the chair of the panel / Headteacher. Commencement of Employment prior to DBS check being received. In unusual circumstances it is permitted to commence employment prior to receiving a cleared DBS check. However a Barring List check and risk assessment must be completed

Employment Offer

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, is always conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of DBS disclosures (in extra-ordinary circumstances), the checks detailed above must all be completed BEFORE a person's appointment is confirmed.

In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment. If the DBS certificate is not received prior to the appointment a risk assessment will be completed and supervision will be arranged until the certificate is received.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The school will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6-month period, after which time the notes will be destroyed (ie: shredded).

The 6 month retention period will allow the school to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or respond to any complaints made to the Employment tribunal.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a subject access request in writing to the chair of the panel / Head Teacher within 6 months of the interview date.

Personal file records

For the successful candidate, the school will retain the following information which will make up part of their personal file:

- Application form
- References
- Disclosure of convictions form
- Proof of identification
- Proof of academic qualifications
- Certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable)
- Medical declaration form
- Evidence of the DBS clearance

Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks In line with DFE requirements.

The school will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The central list will record all staff who are employed at the school, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, governors who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g. specialist sports coach or artist.

The central record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job
- Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom
- Start date of commencement of employment
- Barring List checks
- Prohibition List checks
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure
- Further overseas records where appropriate
- Medical statement date.

Agency supply staff

In order to record supply staff provided through an agency on the record, the school will require written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed the checks described above.

The school does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure.

However identity checks must be carried out by the school to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them.

Probation periods

Newly appointed teachers who are new to the employment of the governing body will be subject to the school's probationary period. All appointments are for an initial twelve-month period.

School staff will be given a copy of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies, part 1 of KCSiE 2021, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the Staff Code of Conduct and asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the documents and will follow the guidelines required to maintain professional boundaries at all times.

The school has a specific safeguarding related whistle blowing policy, contained within the Staff Code of Conduct, which has been disseminated to all staff and volunteers.

The school adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously.

The school will follow DFE and Wirral LA Safeguarding Children Board allegations procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Induction

All newly appointed staff will, either prior to or at the point of taking up the post, undergo a programme of induction appropriate for their post. The induction will specifically address issues concerning the safeguarding of children and young people as well as matters directly related to the operation of the post.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Disclosure

All posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure unless transferring from another educational establishment within three months.

As detailed above, all ex-offenders are dealt with in a fair, respectful manner and that any decision not to appoint someone because of their conviction(s) will be clearly documented.

Date of Last Review: Autumn 2024

Date of Next Review: Autumn 2025

Member of Staff Responsible: M. T. R. Jones