

The Vineyard

Safer Recruitment Policy



Approved by:

Resources Committee

Date: 24 April 2026

Next review due by:

April 2029

THE VINEYARD SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

The Governing Body of The Vineyard School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work. The school has a culture of safe recruitment and adopts recruitment procedures that help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The appointment of all employees will be made on merit and in accordance with the provisions of Employment Law, Keeping Children Safe in Education and the school's Equality and Diversity policy.
- 1.2 We will ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religious or political belief or affiliation, trade union membership, age, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background, or any other inappropriate distinction.
- 1.3 We will comply with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education with regard to DBS and other pre-employment checks.
- 1.4 We will ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

2. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- 2.1 There are some statutory requirements for the appointment of some staff in schools – notably Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers and these requirements will be met.
- 2.2 The power to offer employment for all teaching posts below the level of Deputy Headteacher is delegated to the Headteacher. The Headteacher may not delegate the power to offer employment to any other senior manager or governor.
- 2.3 The Headteacher is expected to involve at least one governor in the appointment of senior leadership team.
- 2.4 Selection panels will comprise a minimum of two people. In accordance with the statutory requirement, every selection panel will have at least one member who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

3. ADVERTISING

- 3.1 All vacant posts will be advertised to ensure equality of opportunity and encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. This will normally mean placing an advertisement externally. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient, suitably qualified internal candidates, or staff are at risk of redundancy, vacancies may be advertised internally first. In these circumstances, the selection panel may decide that certain parts of the recruitment process may be omitted. Where there is more than one candidate competing for a post, all candidates will be subject to a formal interview..
- 3.2 The advert information will include the level of DBS check required depending on the role being recruited for and whether the role will involve regulated activity.
- 3.3 The advert information will state whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020 which means certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed to employers. If they are disclosed, they will not be taken into account.
- 3.4 The advert information states the requirement for a certificate of good conduct, where applicable for overseas candidates. In addition, for teaching posts, a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked may be required.
- 3.5 Within the advert information the applicant will be provided with the school's policy and practice in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

4. INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

All applicants for all vacant posts will be provided with:

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- 4.1 A job description outlining the duties of the post and an indication of where the post fits into the organisational structure of the School.
- 4.2 A person specification will also be provided.
- 4.3 An application form. CVs will not be accepted.
- 4.4 An Information pack containing:
 - A description of the School relevant to the vacant post.
 - Reference to the School's policy on Equality and Diversity.
 - Reference to the Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy.
 - DBS and other pre-employment checks required.
 - A statement that canvassing any member of staff, or member of the Governing Body, directly or indirectly, is prohibited and will be considered a disqualification.
 - The closing date for the receipt of applications.
 - An outline of the terms of employment including salary.
 - Reference to the School's policy on recruitment and selection.

5. SHORT LISTING AND REFERENCE REQUESTS

- 5.1 The selection panel will use an agreed shortlisting form. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants based on the essential and desirable criteria for the post. The selection panel will agree the candidates to be called for interview.
- 5.2 The selection panel will take up at least two references on each shortlisted candidate, where possible before the interview, so that any discrepancies can be probed during the selection stage. If possible, if a candidate for a post working with children is not currently working with children, a reference will be sought from the most recent employment working with children to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving. One reference will be from the applicant's current employer.
- 5.3 Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm:
 - The referee's relationship with the candidate.
 - Details of the applicant's current post and salary.
 - Performance history and conduct.
 - All formal time-limited capability warnings which have not passed the expiration date.
 - All formal time-limited disciplinary warnings not relating to safeguarding concerns which have not passed the expiration date.
 - All disciplinary action where the penalty is "time expired" and relate to the safety and welfare of children.
 - Details of any substantiated allegations or concerns relating to the safety and welfare of children.
 - Whether the referee has any reservations as to the candidate's suitability to work with children. If so, the School will ask for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children.
- 5.4 References are the "property" of the selection panel and strict confidentiality will be observed. Employer testimonials or 'bearer references' ie those provided by the candidate and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' will not be accepted. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. The selection panel will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the candidate. References will be verified and any discrepancies will be discussed with the candidate at interview. Electronic references will be checked to ensure that they originate from a legitimate source.
- 5.5 References will be checked against information on the application; any discrepancy/issue of concern noted to take up with the applicant at interview. The school will contact referees to clarify where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.
- 5.5 If the field of applicants is felt to be weak the post may be re-advertised.
- 5.6 All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

For example:

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- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the barred list
- Whether they are prohibited from teaching
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted
- If they are known to the police and children's social care
- If they have been disqualified from providing childcare (Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018)
- Any relevant overseas information

5.7 Applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate will be asked to physically sign a hard copy of the application at the point of interview.

5.8 We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online.

6. INTERVIEWS

6.1 The format, style and duration of the interviews are matters for the Headteacher to decide. The following will be adhered to:

6.1.1 Briefing:

All candidates will be given relevant information about the School to enable the candidate to make further enquiries about the suitability of the advertised job.

6.1.2 The formal interview:

Before the interviews the selection panel will agree on the interview format. The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each candidate meets the requirement of the job description and the person specification and each candidate will be assessed against all of the criteria for the post. The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will be asked. The selection process for every post, will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of child safeguarding issues. Questions will include:

- Finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children;
- Exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role;
- Probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently asking the reasons for this.

The interview will also explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing include:

- Implication that adults and children are equal
- Lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
- Inappropriate idealisation of children
- Inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children
- Indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours.

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

The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those protected, that the candidate has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment.

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- 6.2 The recruitment documentation will be retained for six months from the date of interview. Applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. After 6 months all information about unsuccessful candidates will be securely destroyed.

7. OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

- 7.1 The offer of employment by the selection panel and acceptance by the candidate is binding on both parties subject to:

- Verification of identity (including birth certificate, where possible)
- Verification of right to work in the UK
- Proof of relevant qualifications
- Satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure
- Certificate of Good Conduct (if applicable) which may include EEA sanctions and restrictions
- Barred list check
- Teacher prohibition check (if applicable)
- Section 128 check (if applicable)
- Pre-employment medical screening
- Satisfactory references
- Disqualification under the Childcare Disqualification Act 2006, as amended

The successful candidate will be informed, normally by offer letter, that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of these checks.

8. PERSONNEL FILE AND SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD

- 8.1 Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of his/her employment with the School including:

- Application form – signed by the applicant
- Interview notes – including explanation of any gaps in the employment history
- References – minimum of 2
- Proof of identity (including birth certificate where possible)
- Proof of right to work in the UK
- Proof of relevant academic qualifications.
- Certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable) which may include for teaching positions, a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked
- Evidence of medical clearance from the Occupational Health service
- Evidence of DBS clearance and barred list check
- Teacher prohibition checks
- Evidence of a Section 128 direction (where applicable)
- Offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment
- Disqualification under the Childcare Disqualification Act 2006, as amended (where applicable)

- 8.2 Retention of personal information for the successful candidate following the end of their employment will be in accordance with the School's Data Retention Policy, which is compliant with the Data Protection Act. When retained documents have reached their data retention limit, they will be securely destroyed.

- 8.3 School HR staff will inspect the record of the DBS result of the successful candidate and make appropriate notice on the Single Central Record but will not take or keep a paper copy.

- 8.4 The School will normally collect personal information from applicants where we have the applicant's consent to do so, where we need the personal information to perform a contact with the applicant, or where the processing is in our legitimate interests and not overridden by the applicant's data protection interests or fundamental rights and freedoms. In some cases, we may also have a legal obligation to collect personal information from the applicant or may otherwise need the personal information to protect the applicant's vital interests or those of another person. The School will retain

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a record of consent as evidence that we have obtained consent to collect and process the data and that applicants have been advised of the purpose of the collection and processing.

- 8.5 The applicant has the right to withdraw their consent at any time and can do so by informing the School's Data Protection Officer, with the exception of documents that are required for a statutory requirement.
- 8.6 The School will maintain a Single Central Record of employment checks in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

9. START OF EMPLOYMENT AND INDUCTION

- 9.1 The pre-employment checks listed in paragraph 8.1 above must be completed before the employee starts work. Exceptions will only be made in circumstances where a risk assessment has been undertaken. Exceptions will never be made in the case of the barred list and teacher prohibition checks.
- 9.2 All new employees will be provided with an induction programme which will cover all relevant matters of School policy but in particular safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This will include:
- Keeping Children Safe policy
 - Behaviour policy (which includes measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and deputies)

Copies of all these policies and a copy of Part 1 or Annex A of KCSIE, if appropriate, will be provided to all staff at induction.

- 9.3 All employees starting a significant change of role will be given a formal training programme.