



Safer Recruitment Policy

In God's hands, we love, learn, grow and inspire

"What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? It is like the mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on the earth. Yet, when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

Mark 4: 30-34

Date Approved by The Board of Trustees	24.9.26
Effective period	1.9.26 – 31.8.27
Reviewer	Mrs E Orton
Date of Review	Sept 26
Next Review Due	July 27

HMFA will ensure that at least one person on every interview panel has completed appropriate safer recruitment training. Those involved in recruitment will receive regular safeguarding updates in line with current statutory guidance.

Currently training is held by:-

Mrs E Orton, CEO

Lord Scudamore Academy

Mrs Z Beecham (SEN Director)

Mrs S McGowan

Mrs C Hughes

Mrs A Jones

Mrs M Williams

Sutton Primary Academy

Mrs V Bloore

Mrs L Board

Mrs A Dallimore

Kings Caple Primary Academy

Mr R James

Mrs C Phipps (Administrative Assistant)

Llangrove CE Academy

Mrs S Dean (Head of School)

Mr E Fox

Mrs A Dilmore

St Weonards Primary Academy

Mr R James

Mrs H Preece-James

Mrs A Williams

Mrs R Williams (Chair of Governors)

Marden Primary Academy

Mrs K Johnson (Head of School)

Mrs L Beecham (Administrator)

Pencombe Primary School

Mrs V Goodman (Head of School)

Mrs R Near (Administrator)

Trustees

Mr M Ashcroft

Mrs J Balderson

Mr K Lawton

Mrs J McColl

Mrs R Williams

Safer recruitment fits within our whole-school safeguarding approach. This policy links to:-

Safeguarding Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Low Level Concerns Policy

Allegations Against Staff

Recruitment and selection process

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

This policy focuses on ensuring potential applicants are given the right messages about the schools' commitment to recruit suitable people.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the minimum requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people.

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training which will be renewed regularly.

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Advertising

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

- Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken;
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children;
- Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account.

Application forms

Our application forms will include:

- a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity);
- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number;
- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving;
- full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment;
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award;
- details of referees/references (see below for further information); and
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification;
- a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders.

Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people and will:

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them;
- Explore all potential concerns.

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage.

The information we will ask for includes:

- 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;
- Any relevant overseas information;
- Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true;
- HMFA will undertake an online search of all shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence process. Candidates will be informed that online searches may be undertaken. Any concerns identified will be considered proportionately, discussed with the candidate where appropriate and recorded. Information relating solely to protected characteristics will not form the basis of recruitment decisions.

Seeking references and checking employment history

At least one reference will be obtained for all shortlisted candidates before interview. Two references will always be in place before appointment is confirmed. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references we will:

- Not accept open references, e.g. "To whom it may concern" rather than sending to a specific employer or previous employer
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees;
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations;
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed;
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children;
- Scrutinise references for safeguarding concerns, disciplinary findings, substantiated allegations, capability concerns or patterns of behaviour that may indicate that a candidate is unsuitable to work with children;
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate;
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed.

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
- 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.
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made

Pre-appointment vetting checks

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

Where available, professional conduct checks and evidence of good standing will be obtained from relevant overseas professional regulators.

New staff

- All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre- employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:
- Verify their identity. Identity checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website;
- Obtain (via the applicant) a new enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before appointment, including when using the DBS update service. The certificate is the property of the candidate but must be seen and checked by a senior member of staff. We will keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken (snapshot). We will seek consent from the applicant to check the DBS on the update service;
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities;
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 6 years afterwards;
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate;
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher before the appointment is confirmed;
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
 - For all staff, including teaching positions: [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#)
 - For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach
 - Where available, professional conduct checks and evidence of good standing will be obtained from relevant overseas professional regulators.

Academies, including free schools, and independent schools:

- Check that candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

** Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant headteachers.*

Schools with pupils aged under 8:

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Childcare Disqualification applies to staff working in:-

- Early years provision (children under 5)
- Later years provision for children under 8 (before and after school care)

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children (4 or more days in a 30-day period) or overnight.; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not
- HMFA will ensure that all individuals engaged in regulated activity are subject to the appropriate DBS and barred list checks before commencing duties. Where there is uncertainty regarding whether a role constitutes regulated activity, safeguarding advice will be sought.

Induction

- All staff who are new to the school will receive safeguarding and child protection induction including safeguarding procedures, staff conduct expectations, low-level concerns procedures, whistleblowing procedures and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- All staff are expected to read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Regular meetings will be held during the first 6 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s).

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

We will refer to the DBS, anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or
- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or
- We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or
- vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff (including contractors)

HMFA will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform (letter of assurance). We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made by checking their company photo ID badge.

Contractors

HMFA will satisfy itself that contractors and organisations using school premises have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place before engagement.

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity;
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity;
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment;
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Governors and Members

All governors, trustees and members will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information. (In HMFA, all Governors, trustees and members have put in writing that they agree to a barred list check.)

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

In our Maintained schools, all governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor).

In our Academies, the chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under [section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#)).
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Governors, trustees and members will receive safeguarding updates appropriate to their role and support monitoring of safeguarding and safer recruitment arrangements across HMFA.

Visitors

Schools and colleges have different types of visitors, those with a professional role i.e. educational psychologists, social workers etc. those connected with the building, grounds maintenance, children's relatives or other visitors attending an activity in school such as a sports day.

- Schools and colleges should not request DBS checks or barred list checks, or ask to see existing DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending a sports day.
- Headteachers should use their professional judgment about the need to escort or supervise such visitors.
- For visitors who are there in a professional capacity check ID and be assured that the

visitor has had the appropriate DBS check (or the visitor's employers have confirmed that their staff have appropriate checks).

Whilst external organisations can provide a varied and useful range of information, resources and speakers that can help schools and colleges enrich children's education, careful consideration should be given to the suitability of any external organisations. School and college safeguarding policies should set out the arrangements for individuals coming onto their premises, which may include an assessment of the education value, the age appropriateness of what is going to be delivered and whether relevant checks will be required.

Artificial Intelligence and Online Conduct

HMFA recognises emerging safeguarding risks associated with artificial intelligence, manipulated content, deepfakes and inappropriate online conduct. Information identified through lawful online searches or recruitment checks that raises concerns regarding professional conduct, safeguarding practice or suitability to work with children may be considered during recruitment.

Positive DBS Disclosures

- In accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act a criminal conviction does not automatically prevent an individual from working for the school. When assessing whether a positive Disclosure is acceptable, the following must be considered:
- whether they will be working in regulated activity and they are on the barred list;
- whether they will be working with children under 8 and have committed offences that disqualify them from doing so;
- the requirements of the role and level of supervision the worker will receive;
- how relevant the offence is to the role to be undertaken;
- how much time has elapsed since the offence was committed and whether it was a one-off incident or part of a history of offending;
- whether the individual's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed making re-offending less likely;
- whether the individual was open and transparent about their past and declared relevant information where required;
- Consider the need for a disclosure discussion;
- The school may seek advice from the Local Authority HR department;
- Positive disclosure form will be kept on the personnel file.

Children placed in alternative provision settings

HMFA remains responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils placed in alternative provision. Written assurance will be obtained that appropriate safeguarding and safer recruitment checks have been completed and a visit and risk assessment to the placement will be carried out before the pupil's start date. HMFA will maintain oversight of safeguarding arrangements within alternative provision placements.

High School pupils on work experience at our schools

We will ensure that pupils from High Schools attending for work experience will be supervised by the teacher they are placed with. We will ensure that they are not taking part in intimate care including accompanying children to the toilet, feeding etc.

Single Central Record

The Single Central Record will be monitored regularly by school leaders and safeguarding leaders to ensure continuing compliance with statutory requirements.

Equality Statement

HMFA is committed to equality of opportunity and will apply safer recruitment procedures fairly, consistently and lawfully. Recruitment decisions will be based on suitability to work with children and the ability to fulfil the requirements of the role.