

Recruitment and Selection Policy

This policy is non-contractual, is not incorporated into your contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

1. Purpose

The safe recruitment of staff into our organisation is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expect all staff to share this commitment. To achieve our aims and objectives it is fundamental that we attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment.

2. Statutory Guidance

We ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), The Equality Act 2010, The Human Rights Act 1998 and any guidance published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) as well as the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and CQC Guidance.

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[The Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated Activities\) Regulations 2014 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](http://legislation.gov.uk)

[DfE Staffing and Employment Guidance for Schools](#)

For our Residential settings at St John's

[Regulations for service providers and managers - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](http://cqc.org.uk)

[Regulation 5: Fit and proper persons: directors - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](http://cqc.org.uk)

Checks to include Companies House database of disqualified directors and checks for insolvency and disbarred directors

[Regulation 17: Good governance - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](http://cqc.org.uk)

[Regulation 18: Staffing - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](http://cqc.org.uk)

[Regulation 19: Fit and proper persons employed - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](http://cqc.org.uk)

[Regulation 20: Duty of candour - Care Quality Commission \(cqc.org.uk\)](http://cqc.org.uk)

Pre-Employment Checks including Right to Work Checks

To ensure that we meet our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people we are legally required to carry out the pre-employment checks detailed in our Recruitment Procedure Document, including [Right to work checks: employer guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Data Protection

Staff and prospective staff will be required to provide the information to enable all the checks applicable to their role to take place. When carrying out all necessary checks we will ensure compliance with Data Protection Legislation including GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 and will process personal information in accordance with our Candidate Privacy Notice. [Data protection: The Data Protection Act - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Online search

As part of the shortlisting process, we will carry out an online search of shortlisted candidates, as required by KCSIE, and as part of our due diligence. This may help to identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which we may want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

Single central record

We maintain a single central record of pre-employment checks as required by KCSIE. The single central record (SCR) covers all permanent staff, with agency, volunteers, and third party supply staff (even if they work for one day) recorded on an offline non-SCR. Trustees and Governing body members are maintained on their own offline non-SCR.

On going safeguarding

- As part of our ongoing duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and to ensure that staff continue to be suitable to work with vulnerable groups, all staff are required to make an annual declaration of no further convictions, cautions or pending court cases.
- All Designated Safeguarding Leads are to be on the DBS Update Service and all members of ELT should also be on that Update Service.

Employment history and references (see separate Reference Policy)

Where possible, we obtain references before interview, to enable any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

In line with KCSiE we will take up the two most recent references, or the 1 most recent, and 1 most relevant to the job role.

For permanent internal applicants (who have already gone through proper recruitment checks including two written references) who are applying for other vacancies/promotion opportunities, a reference may be taken from the current line manager, as part of the recruitment process. For agency staff applying for a permanent role, internal references will be accepted but must also include external references in line with our safer recruitment practices.

Disability Confident Leader

We are a Disability Confident Leader employer and guarantee a first interview for any candidate with a disability who meets the minimum requirements of the role as set out in the job description and person specification. Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability/protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance)

Criminal self-disclosure (see separate ex-offenders policy)

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 and vulnerable adults, for example if they have a criminal history, if they are included on children/adults barred list, or if they are prohibited from teaching.

The vast majority of the roles we recruit are covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (roles in regulated positions and in Further Education provision) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974>

3. Policy Statement

The aim of our Recruitment and Selection Policy is to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability and that all applicants are considered equally and consistently, this includes ensuring at least 2 people are involved in the selection and interview process.

4. Key Principles

- All job applicants are treated fairly on any grounds including age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnerships, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- We are compliant with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published annually by the Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

(KCSIE), The Teaching Regulation Agency, the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), by the Department of Health and Social Care, CQC and the Academies Financial Handbook

- That those involved in the recruitment of staff have received appropriate safer recruitment training in line with KCSIE, including ensuring that at least one member of the interview panel has received safer recruitment training
- That we meet our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out a robust recruitment process, conducting all necessary pre-employment checks and ensuring these are recorded on the Single Central Register (SCR).

Scope: This policy applies to the recruitment of all staff who are under a Contract of Employment or under a Contract for Services. It does not include supply/agency staff, casual workers or volunteers. It also applies to all those involved in recruitment and selection, including Governors and Trustees.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Recruitment Team will work in partnership with all Hiring Managers, supporting their recruitment activity and provide advice and guidance throughout the process. All onboarding checks are supported via the Onboarding Team and Team Leader.

- The Policy is written and updated by the Head of Recruitment
- It is reviewed and approved by the Director of People and Culture
- The Policy is available for all staff on the intranet and is highlighted and referenced in recruitment training for Hiring Managers and the Recruitment Team.
- Recruiting managers adhere to the policy when recruiting to their teams
- Staff adhere to the policy when selected to ensure safeguarding protocols are adhered to

6. Other Key Policies

[037 EDI Policy.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[017 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[021 Induction Policy.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[023 Probationary Policy and Guidance.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[094 Data Protection Policy.pdf - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[039 Volunteering Policy and Procedure.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[013 Trustee and Governor Recruitment Governance Review and Development Policy.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[022 References Policy and Procedure.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Individual Adult Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies are available on the intranet for each setting.

7. Additional Information

Please refer to the **Recruitment & Selection Procedure Document** (Appendix 1 and 2 to this Policy) for full details of our recruitment process and use the links provided there for further information.

Other relevant documents:

- Good Recruitment Practice for Hiring Managers

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

- Good Practice in Recruitment Interviewing
- Guidance for Interview Questions sent in Advance

8. Monitoring Arrangements

- Half termly auditing of the Single Central Record and the accompanying recruitment files
- Ongoing regular monitoring and reviewing of the process by the Recruitment Team and Onboarding Team Leader
- Monitoring of recruitment ED&I Data
- The policy will be reviewed by the Director of People and Culture and approved by the DCEO on a 2 year cycle

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

Appendix 1: Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Sets out the steps to achieve the policy and details the responsibilities of those involved.

1. The Recruitment

Process Vacancies

A new post

A Job Description and Person Specification should be created. The Recruitment Team can provide a template and support creating those documents. The skills, abilities, experience, attitudes and behaviours that are required for the role, including the safeguarding requirements, are to be clearly set out. Only essential requirements are to be included. The role then needs to be presented to the Job Evaluation Committee for Banding.

Replacing someone who is leaving

Review the Job Description, Person Specification and salary banding, in case any changes are required. If the change is more than 30%, the Job Description will need to go to the Job Evaluation Committee for review and banding.

Recruitment Team

For any recruitment activity please ensure you contact the relevant member of the recruitment team who handles such roles. If in doubt, contact the Recruitment Manager for advice on who to contact.

The Recruitment Team should be contacted as soon as possible - whatever the role - even for very senior roles that might be handled by a Search Firm on a retained basis. The team will support the recruitment to all roles and will ensure they are advertised on our career pages, and will support, as required in liaising with a retained search firm, where one is being retained.

Advertising and Applications

All our vacancies must be advertised on our careers pages, and this is managed via our e-recruitment system - eArcu. All internal vacancies must be posted internally and advertised for at least 7 days.

Where appropriate, adverts will also be placed via other sources, e.g. job boards, publications, through appropriate networks and, in exceptional circumstances, with relevant recruitment agencies, to ensure a strong pool of potential candidates to consider. The relevant member of the recruitment team will also headhunt the role using appropriate networks including LinkedIn.

All adverts must include reference to our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and make clear the safeguarding checks that will be undertaken.

Applications from staff re-applying for a vacancy (same role with the same pay and grade), within 6 months of an unsuccessful application, where the panel considered them un-appointable, will not usually be reconsidered for the vacancy, except in exceptional circumstances, eg there is a clear business need, or the candidate's personal circumstances have changed.

All applicants are required to complete an application form online and upload their CV to accompany it via eArcu this will ensure that all the information outlined in KCSIE is included. CVs without the online form will not be accepted, even on assignments being handled exclusively through a search firm. Each candidate being invited to interview must have completed their own application online on our eArcu Jobsite.

2. Shortlisting

Selection methods will be reliable, objective and guard against bias.

All candidates will be vetted throughout the process for their suitability to work in an environment where they

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

will have contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Applications will be assessed and shortlisted by trained members of staff one of which must be Safer Recruitment trained who understand the job and person specification. At least two people will carry out the shortlisting exercise. Selection is managed online via the applicant tracking system, eArcu. All comments made by Hiring Managers and the recruitment team during shortlisting will be recorded directly onto eArcu, allowing for full transparency. The individual shortlisting scoring by each person shortlisting will be saved on eArcu.

Applications will be scrutinised to highlight gaps, areas not completed, areas of potential concerns, altered or other inconsistencies.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview where their relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail. Ambitious about Autism are committed to being an inclusive employer and, as part of that commitment, will share interview questions in advance to all candidates, for all interviews.

Criminal self-disclosure (see ex-offenders policy)

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 and vulnerable adults, for example if they have a criminal history, if they are included on children's/adults barred list, or if they are prohibited from teaching.

Self-declaration forms must be completed, signed and returned no later than one day prior to interview. Self declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records.

If any criminal or other suitability information is disclosed, the Recruitment Team will liaise with the Head of Settings/ELT to agree a) whether the information is protected and, if not, b) how / when the disclosed information should be discussed with the candidate (e.g. during the interview or in a separate meeting).

Online search

As part of the shortlisting process the Recruitment Team will carry out an online search on short listed candidates as part of due diligence. This may help to identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which we may want to explore with the applicant at interview (See separate form and process). This forms part of our wider safeguarding due diligence which aims to prevent and/or deter individuals who may be unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults.

Employment history and references (see separate reference policy)

We obtain references before interview where possible, to allow any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview. We:

- Do not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern
- Do not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- Ensure a reference is from the candidate's current employer and has been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority
- Obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer for the last time the applicant worked with children/vulnerable adults (if not currently working with children/vulnerable young adults), if the applicant has never worked with children, then a reference from their current employer is required
- Verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague, or insufficient information is provided
- Compare the information on the cv/application form with that in the reference, and will explore any discrepancies with the candidate
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post and,

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

- Ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed

In line with KCSiE we will take up the two most recent references, or the 1 most recent, and 1 most relevant to the job role.

For permanent internal employees (who have already gone through proper recruitment checks including two written references) who are applying for other vacancies/promotion opportunities, a reference may be taken up from the current line manager, as part of the recruitment process. For agency staff applying for a permanent role, internal references will be accepted but must also include external references in line with our safer recruitment practices.

3. Interviews

The interview stages must include a minimum of two panel members at each interview stage. An interview cannot proceed unless there are at least two panel members, one of whom must be Safer Recruitment trained. Safer recruitment training and training in best recruitment practice are carried out regularly. Certification for accredited courses regarding safer recruitment training is valid for three years.

We use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post, linked to the job and person specification. For some roles, in addition to the standard panel interview, candidates may also be asked to make a presentation, carry out a task or undertake a trial day. If this is the case, candidates will be notified in advance. As mentioned previously, all candidates will also receive interview questions in advance of their interview.

During the interview the recruitment panel will:

- Find out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for, and their motivation for working in the charity or working with children/vulnerable young adults
- Explore their strengths, skills and competencies, asking for examples of experience of working with children and vulnerable young adults which are relevant to the role
- Assess their emotional resilience and values
- Probe any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking for the reasons.

All candidates interviewed for all posts will be asked a mandatory question “*Have you at any time been subject to an interview, inquiry, children’s services or social services investigation, suspension from work, disciplinary, police investigation, caution or conviction as a result of concerns about child abuse or neglect or the abuse or neglect of an adult?*” As well as the mandatory question there should also be a safeguarding question that relates to the post / role and tests safeguarding knowledge and understanding.

All information considered in the decision making should be clearly recorded (legible handwriting or typed online) along with the decisions made recorded on the interview template form.

All interview notes for successful candidates will be uploaded directly onto the candidate’s digital file on SharePoint. Interview notes for unsuccessful candidates will be safely stored for 6 months before being securely destroyed/deleted.

The interview will be conducted in person wherever possible. If circumstances preclude an in-person interview, Teams conferencing will be used, or when selection involves more than one stage, telephone screening/Teams screening at first stage may be undertaken remotely.

4. Pre-appointment vetting checks, regulated activity

Pre-employment checks are carried out as an essential part of safeguarding our children and vulnerable young adults. These checks are part of our safeguarding regime which continue following appointment. No one can start until all pre-employment vetting checks have been carried out and references, are signed off by a member of the Senior Management/Leadership team at the relevant setting.

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

All offers of appointment are conditional until satisfactory completion of mandatory pre-employment checks:

- Verification of a candidate's identity via Trust ID and sighting of the original documents on the first day of employment by the nominated person at the setting/within the central team
- Obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS check including children and adults barred list for those who will be engaging in regulated activity). The original document is sighted on the first day of employment by the nominated person at the setting/within the central team, and a confirmation form completed, and saved to the individual's e-file. As an organisation we do not permit candidates to commence employment without the relevant DBS check being completed, and original DBS certificate being sighted.
- Verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verification of the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals
- If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, further appropriate checks will be required. An overseas check application will need to be completed by the candidate, with the completed check being provided within the onboarding period. As an organisation we do not permit candidates to commence employment without this completed check, if required.
- Verification of professional qualifications as appropriate for the role, including for teachers - the teacher regulation agency's (TRA) employer access service is used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (GTS) health professionals (including, occupational therapists, speech & language therapists, behaviour analysts) will be checked to ensure they are registered with the relevant regulatory body (e.g.), health and care professionals council (HCPC) and where required professional memberships to ensure that no restrictions are placed on their practice
- For all management positions working at/for AaAST (or seconded to AaAST in a management position) a section 128 direction by the secretary of state must also be checked
- Check that any applicant employed to carry out teaching work (as defined by the teachers' disciplinary (England) regulations 2012 which defines teaching as planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils; delivering lessons to pupils; assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils, and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils, is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the secretary of state or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE before it's abolition in march 2012
- Ensuring that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to work in reception classes, or in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8 are not disqualified from working in these setting under the 2018 childcare disqualifications regulations
- Receipt of two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received)
- ID documents will be verified by an identity document validation service and a reference code will be stored on an employees e-file as the right to work copy. For non-UK passport holders, a share code check will be completed via the home office website and stored on their e-file to confirm they have the right to work in the UK. We will also ensure that the person likeness with the digital file is checked in person/on a video call.

Please note that sight of the originals of all documents is necessary. Photocopies are not sufficient. All original DBS certificates must be verified by trained staff on the first day of employment. The issue date, name, and DBS number will be recorded on the single central record. No copy will be made of the certificate. Once the document has been verified, and the required information recorded on the SCR, the document will be returned to the person.

Staff who are appointed on a fixed term contract are also subject to the same recruitment, selection and vetting processes as detailed above.

5. Criminal convictions (see Ex-offenders Policy)

Any relevant criminal records disclosed by a candidate or positive DBS checks must be discussed with the Head of Settings/ELT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If a candidate with a disclosed criminal record

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

or a positive DBS is to be offered a post, the offences must be discussed with the candidate, and the result of those discussions recorded using the risk assessment form. All completed risk assessments will be submitted to the Designated Safeguarding lead for review. An offer of employment cannot be redacted on the basis of information disclosed on an enhanced DBS without the applicant being given an opportunity to provide further information.

6. Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff. In addition further appropriate checks should be carried out including:

- criminal record checks for overseas applicants as per Home Office guidance
- obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions and/or that they are not aware of any reason as to why they may be unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults

As an organisation we do not permit candidates to commence employment without this completed check, if required. It is not acceptable for a risk assessment to be conducted.

7. Single central record

We maintain a single central record (SCR) of pre-employment checks as set out in KCSIE. The single central record covers all permanent staff, with an offline SCR being maintained for agency, volunteers and third party supply staff (even if they work for one day). Trustees and Governing body members are maintained on their own offline SCR.

8. On going safeguarding

- As part of our ongoing duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and to ensure that staff continue to be suitable to work with vulnerable groups, all staff are required to make an annual declaration of no further convictions, cautions or pending court cases.
- All Designated Safeguarding Leads should be on the DBS Update Service.

9. Fraudulent Applications

Providing false information could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected. If an application turns out to be fraudulent this may need to be referred to the police as a criminal act may have been committed ie. obtaining Pecuniary Advantage by Deception. A referral may also be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if it is believed the fraudulent application may indicate that the individual is unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults.

10. Candidate feedback

As part of our commitment to good practice, we offer verbal feedback to all unsuccessful candidates after interview, where possible, within three weeks from the date of interview. We can only offer feedback to internal applicants who are not shortlisted for interview. All other applicants will receive notice of the decision via our applicant tracking system.

11. Complaints procedure

Any candidate who considers that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against should follow our [complaints procedure](#) within two weeks of a selection decision being made. Complaints received will be investigated promptly and sensitively in line with our procedure.

12. Retention, security of records and data protection obligations

We will comply with our obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under our Data Protection Policy. We will comply with our data protection obligations in respect of the processing of criminal records information. More information on this is included in the Privacy Notice and our Data Protection Policy.

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4

Appendix 2: Summary of When Other Checks Are Required for those not Employed

Governors and Trustees (see recruitment for Trustees and Governors policy)

All governors and trustees / board members are required to have an enhanced DBS certificate without a barred list check, with the exception of the Chair of Trustees who is vetted by the Secretary of State for Education via Ofsted. S128 checks are required for some governors and / or trustees.

Agency and Contractors

In the case of agency or contract workers, we obtain written confirmation from the agency or company that it has carried out the appropriate checks (identity, enhanced DBS check renewed every 3 years, right to work in the UK, barred list checks if appropriate, prohibition, qualifications, overseas checks, and in line with KCSIE 2 references, declaration of medical fitness, check of previous employment history, online search).

We carry out identity checks on agency and contract workers on arrival in our settings and are provided with a copy of the DBS check. The agency or contract workers are recorded on the non-SCR. Agency staff will remain on a green lanyard.

Contractors on site will not be left alone in areas where they can be with children or vulnerable adults or have access to data about children or adults at the school or other services. If employed to work with children or vulnerable adults then they will be subject to the same checks as an employee; the contract will make clear the checks that AaA / AaAST expects the contractor to complete. Volunteers: see Volunteer Policy and Process

Policy Owner	Director of People	Review Date:	March 2028
Policy No.	020	Version No.	4