



## **Woodcote House School**

### **Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures Policy and Procedure September 2023**

#### **References**

ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools - The Regulatory Requirements March 2023  
DfE Statutory Guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', Sept 2023

#### **General**

Woodcote House School ('the School') is committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the children and young people in its care. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

The School aims to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

All queries on the School's Application Form and recruitment process must be directed to the Bursar.

#### **Scope of this Policy**

The Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures Policy and Procedure herewith refers and applies to staff directly recruited and employed by the School. In the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, staff are defined as:

*'Any person working at the School whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract, but does not include supply staff or a volunteer'.*

In the case of agency or contract workers, the School shall obtain written confirmation from the agency or company that it has carried out the appropriate checks. The school conducts identity checks on agency and contract workers on arrival in school and, in the case of agency workers which includes supply staff, the school must be provided with a copy of the DBS check for such staff.

Any staff who TUPE transfer into the School's staff, will be required to undertake the statutory requirements with regard to safer recruitment checks.

### **Application Form**

The School will only accept applications from candidates completing the relevant Application Form in full. CVs will not be accepted in substitution for completed Application Forms.

The School will make candidates aware that all posts in the School involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post. Candidates for employed posts will receive a Job Description and Person Specification for the role.

As the position for which candidates are applying involves substantial opportunity for access to children, it is important that applicants provide the School with legally accurate answers. Upfront disclosure of a criminal record may not debar a candidate from appointment as the School shall consider the nature of the offence, how long ago and at what age it was committed and any other relevant factors. Information should be submitted in confidence enclosing details in a separate sealed envelope which will be seen and then destroyed by the Bursar. If candidates would like to discuss this beforehand, they are asked to please telephone in confidence to the Bursar for advice.

Any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings must be disclosed to the School. However, amendments to The Rehabilitation of Offender Act 1974 Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) states that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers, and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service website.

The successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure Form from the Disclosure and Barring Service ('DBS') for the position. Additionally, successful applicants should be aware that they are required to notify the school immediately if they are any reasons why they should not be working with children. This includes any staff who are disqualified from childcare or registration including 'by association', i.e. they live in the same household (or someone is employed in their household) as someone who has unspent cautions or convictions for a relevant offence (please see a list of the relevant offences set out here): [dbs-factsheet-05.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

The 'by association' requirement also applies if you live in the same household as or someone is employed in your household who has been disqualified from working with children under the Childcare Act 2006.

Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (June 2016) applies to those providing early years childcare or later years childcare, including before school and after school clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 and to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.

The school takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children **must** notify the school immediately. This will include notification of any convictions,

cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings he/she may receive. He/she must also notify the school immediately if he/she is living in a household where anyone lives or works who has been disqualified from working with children or from registration for the provision of childcare.

Staff and/or successful candidates who are disqualified from childcare or registration, including 'by association', may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such individuals may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed. Please speak to the Bursar for more details.

Failure to declare any convictions (that are not subject to DBS filtering) may disqualify a candidate for appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light subsequently.

The School has a legal duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This is known as the Prevent duty. Schools are required to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. Accordingly, as stated in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022:

'...as part of the shortlisting process, schools should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on... shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview (para 220, KCSIE 2022).

Therefore, candidates should be aware that the School will conduct an online search prior to interview as outlined above.

If the candidate is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, the School will ask their current employer about disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young persons (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether the candidate has been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and if so the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure.

If the candidate is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, the School will ask the previous employer about those issues. Where neither the current nor previous employment has involved working with children, the School will still ask the current employer about the candidate's suitability to work with children. Where the candidate has no previous employment history, the School may request character references which may include references from the candidate's school or university.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal by the School if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

### **Invitation to Interview**

The School will shortlist applicants according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. As part of this process, an online search of all shortlisted candidates will be carried out as part of the school's due diligence on these shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

All formal interviews will have a panel of at least two people chaired by the Head or Bursar. It is recommended best practice that at least one person on the appointment panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. The Proprietor should chair the panel for the Bursar's/Head's appointment. The interviewers involved will be required to state any prior personal relationship or knowledge of any of the candidates and a judgement will be made by the Chair as to whether or not an interviewer should withdraw from the panel. Should the Chair have a conflict of interest, the Vice Chair shall decide whether the Chair should withdraw from the panel.

The interview will be conducted in person and the areas which it will explore will include suitability to work with children.

All candidates invited to interview must bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are required or relevant for the post (e.g. the original or certified copy of certificates, diplomas, etc.). Where originals or certified copies are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained by the candidate from the awarding body.

The School requests that all candidates invited to interview also bring with them:

1. Two satisfactory references
2. A current driving license including a photograph, a passport and a full birth certificate
3. A utility bill or financial statement issued within the last three months showing the candidate's current name and address
4. Where appropriate any documentation evidencing a change of name
5. Proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK.

**Please note that originals of the above are necessary. Photocopies or certified copies are not sufficient.**

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview should inform the School of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

#### **Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks**

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

1. Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received)
2. Verification of identity and qualifications including, where appropriate, evidence of the right to work in the UK (if not already received)
3. A satisfactory enhanced DBS check and if appropriate, a check of the Barred List maintained by the DBS
4. For a candidate to be employed as a teacher, a check that that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State
5. Verification of professional qualifications, where appropriate
6. Verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (for teaching posts - applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)

7. Where the successful candidate has worked or been resident overseas such checks and confirmations as the School may consider appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered
8. Confirmation of satisfactory physical and mental fitness
9. Confirmation from you that you are not disqualified from providing childcare under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (June 2016) and receipt of a signed Staff Suitability Declaration form showing that you are not disqualified from providing childcare under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (June 2016)
10. Where the successful candidate will be taking part in the management of the school, a check will be carried out under Section 128 of the Independent Educational Provision in England (Prohibition on Participation in Management) Regulations 2014. This applies to members of the Senior Management Team.

It is the School's practice that a successful candidate must complete a Medical Declaration Form. The information contained in the form will then be held by the School in strictest confidence. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role, i.e. proposed workload, extra-curricular activities and layout of the School.

The School is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, considering medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

### **References**

The School will seek references for shortlisted candidates and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview. If the candidate does not wish the School to take up references in advance of the interview, they should notify the School at the time of applying.

The School will ask all referees if the candidate is suitable to work with children.

The School will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the Application Form. Any inconsistencies will be discussed with the candidate.

### **Criminal Records Policy**

The School will refer to the Department for Education ('DfE') document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and any amended version in carrying out the necessary required DBS checks.

The School complies with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice, a copy of which may be obtained from the Bursar on request.

### **DBS Update Service**

Where an applicant subscribes to the DBS Update Service, the applicant must give consent to the School to check there have not been changes since the issue of a disclosure certificate. A barred list check will still be required.

### **If disclosure is delayed**

A short period of work is allowed under controlled conditions, at the Headmaster's discretion. However, if an 'enhanced disclosure' is delayed, the Headmaster may allow the member of staff to commence work:

- Without confirming the appointment
- After a satisfactory check of the barred list if the person will be working in regulated activity and all other relevant checks (including any appropriate prohibition checks) having been completed satisfactorily
- Provided that the DBS application has been made in advance
- With appropriate safeguards taken (for example, loose supervision)
- Safeguards reviewed at least every two weeks by the Head/Bursar and member of staff
- The person in question is informed what these safeguards are
- It is recommended (but not a requirement) that a note is added to the Single Central Register and evidence kept of the measures put in place.

### **Retention and Security of Records**

The School will comply with its obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under its Data Protection Policy. Copies of DBS Certificates will not be held on file, but must be seen in their original state prior to the commencement of any employment. A copy of the DBS Certificate Number will be kept on file.

### **Appendix**

#### **Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders**

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him/her from employment within the School. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the School to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, whether by association, or otherwise.

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. The School will report the matter to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- the School receives an application from a disqualified person;
- is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or
- the School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- in the case of disqualification from providing childcare, whether the applicant has or is able to obtain an Ofsted waiver from disqualification; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious Class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving.

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