



Safer Recruitment Policy

September 2024

The recruitment steps outlined below are based on part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Governors and staff of Harvills Hawthorn recognise that recruiting and retaining the right staff is at the heart of providing a quality learning experience for pupils. We use robust safer recruitment practices to ensure we promote the safeguarding and welfare of children.

We recognise the value of, and seek to achieve, a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities. We aim to create and maintain a skilled, balanced, conscientious and committed team that reflects the diversity of the people we serve.

We are committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the school is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, and effective and promotes equality of opportunity. Our school upholds its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of Protective Characteristics as defined in the Single Equality Act 2010

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.

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.

Responsibilities

The School Governors are responsible, in conjunction with the Head for:

- formulation, review and subsequent amendment of the policy statement and procedures covering the recruitment and retention of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DFE guidance and legal requirements
- Monitoring the school's compliance with the policy and procedures

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- the implementation of the safer recruitment and retention policy and procedures
- liaison with Governors to ensure full compliance with its requirements
- identification of staff in the organisation responsible for aspects of implementation ensuring that all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school
- ensuring contractors' and agencies' compliance
- ensuring all staff including specifically those involved in recruitment and retention processes are issued with the policy and made aware of their responsibilities
- promoting the welfare of children and young people at every stage

Managers and other staff involved in recruitment and retention are responsible for:

- Ensuring they are fully aware of the policy and procedures
- Compliance as appropriate to their role.

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).

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

Candidates will be informed that the school may carry out online checks as part of the due diligence process to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online.

Seeking References and Checking Employment History

When seeking references we will:

- Not accept open references
- 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

- 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
- 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.

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
- Obtain an 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, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- 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 2 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
- 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

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.

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; 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

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

We 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. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

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.

Volunteers and Students

- Harvills Hawthorn welcomes students and volunteers recognising they often bring new ideas and perspectives to the school.
- All volunteers are vetted to ensure their suitability to be in contact with the school setting and an Enhanced DBS Disclosure is required.
- All volunteers and students are made aware of the ethos and confidentiality and safeguarding children procedures before they start.
- All volunteers and students are made to feel welcome and are not given duties which members of staff would not be happy to perform.
- Students/volunteers under 17 are never left unsupervised with children.
- A named mentor is allocated to each student/volunteer to ensure they gain as much as possible from their placement.

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

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

Staff working in alternative provision settings

When we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Recruitment information

- Recruitment packs will be prepared for all posts and will include a statement of commitment to safeguarding children and equality of opportunities.
- a job description, person specification and approved application form.

Applications require:

- Full and complete information about employment/education history.
- Disclosure of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect applicants' suitability to work with children. (posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974)
- Enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service

Recruitment advertising

- Posts may be advertised externally or internally; internal advertising will be used initially if there are considered to be sufficient suitable candidates within the school with the appropriate skills for the post.
- Recruitment advertisements will include appropriate safeguarding and equalities statements indicating the school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting equality of opportunity for all including encouragement of applications from underrepresented groups.

Shortlisting

- Applicants will be shortlisted against the job description and the person specification, using a short-listing grid for each applicant.
- Significantly incomplete application forms will be rejected.
- Applicants will be judged entirely on their suitability for the post rather than any Protective Characteristic
- Gaps in employment/education history will be highlighted for further exploration at interview
- Relevant qualifications will be checked on the Department for Education qualification database to determine if the applicant meets the requirements of the post.
- Applications will be checked for information about previous convictions which may prevent the employment of individual candidates for further exploration at interview
- Incorrect information on application forms may be treated as fraudulent and the appropriate authorities informed.

Selection process

- Selection will be by a panel consisting of at least 2 panel members
- The selection panel will be aware of their roles and of their legal obligations with reference to relevant legislation.
- At least one member of the panel will have attended 'Safer Recruitment' training.
- Assessments for all candidates will be consistent with standard tasks, questions and scoring grids,
- The task and/or questions will assess skills knowledge against the person specification and job description and will also include activities designed to reveal candidates' attitude towards children & young people, attitudes and motives for working with children, knowledge of child protection and their ability to support the school in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- The selection panel will use further questioning to explore incomplete answers. Gaps in employment/ education or other areas of concern on the application will also be explored further.
- Interview notes will be factual and objective as notes made may be requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Pre appointment checks

Identity checks

All short-listed candidates are required to provide:

- Appropriate original identity documents such as passport, driving licence, national insurance number, and proof of address which is not less than 3 months old.
- Original qualification certificates
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK. Foreign nationals must have appropriate asylum and immigration checks before being offered employment.

References

- At least two written references will be sought, one of which must be from the most recent employer or learning provider. Testimonials will not be accepted in place of references.
- Email references will be accepted providing these are from an appropriate organisational email or have been authenticated by other means
- If references have not been received after two weeks a further request will be made to the referee.
- All offers will be subject to receipt of satisfactory references
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DBS and other checks

- Adults will not have unsupervised access to children unless an Enhanced Disclosure has been returned and is clear of any convictions.
- The DBS Disclosure request will include a Barred List check and the following information: reference number and date of issue Disclosures are handled in accordance with the DBS's Code of Practice.
- If the DBS check reveals any convictions, cautions or police information, guidance may be sought from Ofsted's helpline on 0300-123-1231 and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer **without** revealing the identity of the candidate
- The school will maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DFE requirements

DBS and other checks for current staff

Staff and volunteers must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the school).

Job descriptions, contracts and personal records

- All staff and volunteers receive job descriptions which accurately set out their roles and responsibilities. Job descriptions are reviewed regularly and updated if necessary.
- Job descriptions are formulated in line with the Equality policy and accurately reflect the requirements of the job, including the responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- All employees are provided with a copy of their terms and conditions within two months of starting work which together with their letter of appointment forms their contract. A copy is retained by the school.
- Information about a new employee's probationary period is included within the terms and conditions of employment. This period may be extended if appropriate.
- All records relating to staff and volunteers are kept securely at the school
- Staff are entitled to request to see their personal record
- Records will be retained for a specified time then disposed of appropriately

Induction

- An induction is provided for all new staff, students and volunteers

- An induction covers the essential information that employees need in their job role and setting.
- New employees' performance will be monitored by their line manager and any identified development needs and other specific issues will be addressed
- The initial induction includes: familiarisation with the premises and training on key policies, including our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Whistleblowing policy; safe working practice; the health and safety policies, including the emergency evacuation procedures, the Equality policy.
- For employees who are new to the children's workforce, induction is linked to the Induction Standards which are based on the Common Core of Skills and Knowledge for the Children's Workforce. These set out what new staff should know and be able to do within the first six months of starting work

RETENTION

Harvills Hawthorn aims to retain and further develop high quality staff to ensure a quality learning experience for pupils. The following policies and procedures support this aim:

- Performance management
- Continuous Professional Development

Performance Management

- All staff have regular performance management (PM) meetings and appraisals.
- Line managers supervise the work of staff on a day-to-day basis
- PM provides staff with the opportunities to:
 - discuss any issues, including those concerning children's development or wellbeing;
 - Identify solutions to address issues as they arise
 - Receive coaching, where appropriate, to improve their personal effectiveness
 - Discuss sensitive issues confidentially
- In addition to formal and informal PM, all staff have an annual appraisal.

Continuing Professional Development

- The development needs of all staff are addressed through the CPD policy.
- The training needs of staff are systematically monitored and to facilitate their access to appropriate training and development..
- Records of training and development will be kept and stored securely in the school setting.
- Staff will be responsible for keeping their own portfolios up-to-date, and the portfolios should include qualification certificates and certificates from training attended.
- Staff who have attended training will be expected to disseminate training to the rest of the staff team, if deemed necessary and appropriate.
- We will endeavour to support staff to improve their **qualification levels** wherever possible, usually subject to the needs of the school not the individual

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure

- The disciplinary procedure is in line with current employment legislation and is designed to encourage employees to reach the highest standards of conduct and to be fair and effective when dealing with disciplinary matters.
- The grievance procedure is in line with current employment legislation and we aim to settle grievances quickly and fairly.

Harvills Hawthorn also ensures that the principles of safeguarding and equalities are continuously supported in respect of employees' actions.

The following policies and procedures apply:

Safeguarding & Child Protection;

Equalities policy

Confidentiality and Information Sharing;

Data Protection;

Internet Use;

Whistleblowing and Low Level Concerns policies

Disciplinary and Grievance policies