

Woodlands Schools



Safer Recruitment Policy

This policy includes EYFS & Little Acorns

Excellence for all through teaching, learning, opportunity, and achievement

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Safer Recruitment Policy

Purpose

A School's most valuable resource is its employees, and the process of recruiting new people into the school and ensuring that the right people are recruited into the right posts is arguably the most important activity undertaken by the school.

It is imperative however, that the school ensures that its policy and procedures are sufficiently rigorous and robust to support other safeguarding measures undertaken by the school. It is important that schools take reasonable steps to guard against the employment of individuals who might harm children and Woodlands Schools Ltd is committed to such a process and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This Policy sets out the school's policy and the processes to be followed when recruiting and gives guidance on the legal and ethical constraints to be observed. The recruitment process aims to ensure that individuals are treated on their merits and abilities.

Safer Employment Practices

Woodlands Schools follow the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children, as set out in "Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026)". All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches, and all directors are checked with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before starting work. Where a DBS is brought from another company with less than a three-month gap, or in the event of a delay receiving a DBS check a barred list check and risk assessment will be made. Following the UK's exit from the EU, schools and colleges should apply the same approach for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world. Overseas checks and EEA will also be made as applicable. All volunteer helpers and contractors working regularly during term-time, such as contract catering staff and ICT support technicians, are also vetted with accordance to the role they will be taking. Agencies/contractors must provide evidence that full regulatory checks have been made before starting work. The School checks the DBSs of all adults not employed by the school who work with or supervise our pupils off site, for example on residential trips.

In addition to the DBS checks, a check on prohibition is carried out on anyone who is appointed to carry out teaching work. Prohibition from management checks is carried out on staff employed within roles from September 2015.

Staff who are employed by another organisation and not directly by Woodlands Schools (e.g., agency staff Little Acorns and maintenance contractors) are required to provide evidence of identity and, if applicable, DBS status on arrival and prior to commencing their work at the school. They are required to sign in at the front office and always wear a visitor's badge or tabard (Little Acorns). Agencies must provide proof that all necessary checks have been carried out.

Warning

Where a candidate is: a) found to be on the DBS or Teachers' Pension Scheme Barring Lists, or the Enhanced DBS disclosure, shows he/she has been disqualified from working with children by a Court, or b) found to have provided false information in support of his/her application, or c) the subject of expressions or concern as to his/her suitability to work with children, the facts will be reported to the Teacher Regulation Agency and/or the Police and any offer of employment by Woodlands Schools Ltd will be immediately withdrawn.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Woodlands Schools Ltd.

Authority to Recruit

Any Manager wishing to recruit a new member of staff into the school in any capacity and whether the new employee is replacing someone who has left or is an additional member of the team, authorisation must firstly be obtained from a Director/Bursar.

Salaries and Benefits

Salary ranges and benefits packages may only be authorised by a Director/Bursar.

Advertising

The decision whether to advertise a vacancy or not rests with the Directors, who will also approve the choice of media and any budgetary limitations.

All recruitment advertisements placed by the school will indicate the school commitments to Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding Policy. Advertisements will also state that DBS checks will be made in respect of all posts.

Recruitment advertisements will not include any reference to an age range. Neither will they refer to any term of experience, or qualifications. Instead, the copy must include an indication of the competencies, or the skills, knowledge, or abilities required to do the job. Advertisements will not

use wording that encourages stereotyping or discourages groups of people from making an application.

Copy for recruitment advertisements will not be written in language which suggests a culture which favours any group.

Agencies

The school policy is that use of recruitment agencies other than in exceptional circumstances is avoided unless the express permission of a director is provided. Any recruitment consultancies or head-hunters that are briefed by the school will be furnished with:

- A job specification, which will include a set of the key competencies for the job.
- A person specification.
- Details of the salary range and the benefits package.
- Details of how the school would like to receive applications.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

An up-to-date job specification and person specification will be prepared by the Head Teacher/Director before recruitment begins.

The job specification will describe the responsibilities of the job holder and identify the competencies required for satisfactory fulfilment of the role.

A person specification will be drawn up before the recruitment process begins. The person specification identifies key competencies as well as the type of role the ideal candidate might have occupied before and the sectors within which he/she might have worked. Person specifications must not include any reference to age.

In summary these must contain:

- Job title
- Head Teacher/Line Manager
- Main duties and responsibilities
- Responsibilities for promotion of and adherence to safeguarding the welfare of students
- Hours of work
- Supervisory responsibilities where appropriate
- Budgetary or other responsibilities where appropriate.

The person specification as a minimum will contain the following:

- Essential qualifications
- Essential competencies including teaching experience
- Prior experience of working with children
- Essential knowledge
- An indication of other desirable competencies for the role.

Both documents will be verified to ensure that the content and style is non-discriminatory.

Candidate Information Pack

All job candidates will be supplied with a Candidate Information Pack which will include the following:

- Child Protection Statement
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Application Form
- Application and Recruitment process explanatory notes

Applications

The school will only accept applications in writing using the school's application form. A CV may be submitted to support an application form but will not be accepted in place of an application form being completed.

The form is designed to support a robust recruitment mechanism to highlight candidates' key competencies but also to assist in identifying anomalies and discrepancies for further investigation.

Details of two employment referees will be requested at this stage.

Selection Interviews

External candidates will be invited to interview by letter/email and advised of time and date and asked to bring in proof of identity, proof of entitlement to work in the UK and original certificates relating to all relevant qualifications. Candidates will also be asked to complete a "Self-Disclosure Form" and return it to the school before the date of the interview.

As part of the shortlisting process HR may carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on shortlisted candidates. The searches will be conducted on Google using the candidates name, location, and current employer. This is to determine suitability to work with children and keep them safe.

Candidates will be advised that they may be subject to such searches, and if there is anything concerning, they will be asked to comment at interview.

All selection interviews will be conducted by two members of staff including one senior member of the school who will usually be the Head Teacher/Line Manager and one of whom is trained in Safer Recruitment practices.

Normally, selection interviews will be conducted at the school.

Those involved in the selection interview process must ensure that:

- proper arrangements have been made to meet and greet the candidates.
- arrangements have been made to eliminate or minimise interruptions and other distractions.
- interview is conducted in a friendly, non-threatening manner.
- questions are prepared in a consistent manner to be asked of all candidates. Checks will be undertaken to ensure that questions are non-discriminatory.
- questions include an examination of candidates' knowledge and experience of safeguarding measures.
- technique is used to explore candidates' suitability to work with children.
- questions and scenarios are prepared to investigate omissions, discrepancies and anomalies within the candidates' applications and the selection process thus far.
- care is taken to always present the school in a positive light.

Interview questions will be designed to elicit information about the candidate's ability to match the competencies of the job. Questions will not be posed which relate to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Questions regarding a candidate's health will not be posed unless it is necessary to establish whether that candidate can perform an intrinsic part of the job for which they have applied. Applicants will be encouraged to discuss needs for support to attend interview or any other part of the selection process.

Interviewing Managers will use a competency-based interview pro-forma as the basis for the selection interview. Only candidates who achieve the requisite score will be shortlisted.

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Full and thorough notes will be retained of all selection interviews.

Job Offers

The final decision to recruit will be made by the Director/Head Teacher.

The offer letter will be approved and signed by the Bursar.

The contract of employment will be prepared by the Bursar and given to the new employee within eight weeks of their start date.

Job offers will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks as detailed below.

Pre-Employment Checks

It is the policy of Woodlands Schools Ltd to undertake a range of pre-employment checks as detailed below.

Under no circumstances can employment commence prior to the receipt of satisfactory outcomes across the full range of checks. In some cases below an interview will not be offered before the checks are made.

References

The school will request a minimum of two employment references prior to interview. The information requested will include details concerning performance, perceived suitability to work with children, complaints and grievances received against the applicant, current and time-expired disciplinary warnings. Verbal references can be accepted, detailed written notes will be documented, signed, and dated to record the content of any verbal reference provided. The school reserves the right to take up further references prior to offering employment.

The school will not accept open references and will not supply open references in the case of former employees. References addressed 'To Whom It May Concern' or similar will not be accepted. Photocopied references will not be accepted.

The school will not accept references from family or friends. Each referee must be known to the candidate in an employment and professional capacity.

References may be discussed and/or challenged during the selection interview.

Where satisfactory references are not available, employment cannot be offered.

Disclosure & Barring Service Checks

It is the policy of the school to request an enhanced disclosure as its DBS check. Woodlands Schools uses Atlantic Data to process DBS checks. Checks will be conducted at the expense of the school.

The school complies fully with the DBS code of practice regarding the correct handling, use, storage and disposal of disclosures and disclosure information.

If a DBS is not received before the candidate starts their employment, a Risk Assessment is completed and they are supervised at all times.

Volunteers will all be Enhanced DBS checked, and Visitors are asked for their DBS details and proof of ID when they arrive.

Where a DBS check proves unsatisfactory, employment cannot be offered.

The school is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 regarding all posts. Where a DBS is not required (3-month rule) or a DBS result is delayed, the Teachers' Pension Service will be contacted, and a Barred List Check will be made.

Prohibition Order Checks

The school will carry out a Prohibition Order Check using the online service, if appropriate for the role.

Disqualification from Childcare

Where appropriate, candidates will be required to sign a declaration form regarding their responsibilities in relation to disqualification from childcare. This is issued with the Recruitment Pack before the candidate is employed.

Proof of Identity

All candidates will be required to provide original documents which serve to prove their identity. Acceptable documents must include a full, current, and valid birth certificate, driving licence or passport as well as proof of address (which has been issued within the last 3 months) and some form of photographic identity.

Entitlement to Work in the UK

No assumptions regarding immigration status will be made and, as such, all candidates must supply evidence of their entitlement to work in the UK. The school will seek to verify the authenticity of each document supplied and will take copies of each for its records.

Where evidence of entitlement to work in the UK cannot be provided, employment cannot be offered.

Overseas Checks

Where a candidate has lived or worked abroad for more than 3 months in the past 10 years, appropriate relevant overseas checks will be made.

Essential Qualifications

All qualifications will be checked in advance of appointment. For compliance purpose, this applies to any qualifications taken into account in making the appointment. The school will seek to verify the authenticity of each qualification and will take copies of each for its records.

Where original certificates cannot be provided, employment cannot be offered.

Professional Status - Teaching Staff Only

Evidence of candidate's professional status will also be required including but not limited to possession of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). Evidence will be verified by the school.

Gaps in Employment

All candidates will be asked to supply documentary evidence to substantiate gaps in employment. This may include statements from Employment Services and the Benefits Agency where periods of unemployment are identified.

Where gaps in employment cannot be substantiated, employment cannot be offered.

Medical Clearance

The school will also take steps to ensure that the successful candidate is both physically and mentally fit to undertake the duties and responsibilities prior to confirmation of the appointment and therefore may be required to undergo a medical examination with an Occupational Health Adviser appointed by the school.

Induction and Probation

New employees will be provided essential induction training and assigned a mentor, who will ensure that a full and thorough induction process is followed.

Towards the end of the new employee's probationary period, he/she will be invited to a meeting for a formal review of progress. Those who have settled in well and acquired a satisfactory level of performance and understanding of the needs of the role, as well as the school's culture and ethos, will be confirmed as being employed in a permanent capacity.

The key elements to induction training are as follows:

- a. Assignment of a mentor, where appropriate
- b. Understanding and signing up to the School's Code of Conduct
- c. Understanding and assimilation of the School's Safeguarding Policies
- d. Understanding and assimilation of KCSIE 2026
- 3. Relevant training including Child Protection
- f. Support and supervision as required
- g. Introduction to and understanding of HR policies
- h. Introduction to and understanding of Health and Safety policies
- i. Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

Unsuccessful Candidates

The school's policy is to retain details of unsuccessful candidates, including reasons for rejection, on file for a period of four months. Thereafter these details will be destroyed.

To guard against possible claims of discrimination it is the school's policy to keep a record of the reasons why candidates were unsuccessful. This applies equally to those who were not selected for interview as for those interviewed.

We do not keep details of unsuccessful candidates on file without permission from the candidate to do so.

Monitoring

A record will be kept of every candidate for each piece of recruitment carried out by the school, to monitor and analyse the initial response, the number selected for interview and the number finally offered employment against certain criteria.

Promotions

All vacancies will be advertised internally. Employees who wish to apply should apply using the method outlined in this policy.

Candidates will be assessed against the competencies, skills, knowledge, or abilities for the role.

The successful and unsuccessful candidates will be advised as soon as possible after the interview process

has been completed either verbally or by letter. All candidates will be offered feedback.

The successful candidate will have their appointment confirmed by letter and/or an addendum or revised contract of employment.

APPENDIX A

Staff Inductions Checklists Staff Inductions Checklists

Woodlands
Schools



New Staff CHILD PROTECTION & INDUCTION Checklists

Employee's Name:

Start Date

Inductor

Mentor

Probationary Review Meeting Date

I,
have attended an induction session at Great Warley/Hutton Manor/Head Office* (*please circle as appropriate) and have read and am familiar with the contents of the following documents:

- The School's Safeguarding Child Protection Policy, I am aware of procedures for Child Protection and Staff Code of Conduct at Woodlands Schools including Children Missing from Education (CME)
- I am aware of The School's Whistleblowing procedures.
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' DfE Guidance Sept 2023 – Part 1, Annexe B.
- The School's Anti Bullying Policy.
- The school's policy on Health and Safety.
- E-Safety Policy, including acceptable use of ICT.
- Mobile Phone & Camera Policy (Little Acorns)
- Promoting Good Behaviour Policy and Discipline
- The School's First Aid Policies.
- Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy (2023)
- Risky Areas Policy
- Have completed Channel General Awareness training (Prevent Duty).
- Know that.....is the designated lead and that in his/her absence.....is the deputy.
- Understand the responsibilities of all staff in this area and the issues that may arise.
- Understand my obligations in respect of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, if relevant.
- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Policy

In addition, I have read the Staff information booklet and am aware that it is my responsibility to read the Staff Handbook.

Signed:

New Staff INDUCTION PROCESS Checklist

Induction Processes	Initials	Date
New Staff Child Protection Induction Checklist (see over)		
Full school tour including staff room and working area(s)		
Extranet password given so that policies and staff handbook can be read		
Term dates passed to new staff member		
First Aid course dates and any other training dates to be given		
Fire Safety Policy and Evacuation		
Information re days worked at the start and end of terms		
Nursery staff would need to complete Food Hygiene Level 1 online		
Questions and answers		

Induction process completed by

(Signature)

Print Name

Date: