



Safer Recruitment Policy

Version number	Date of change	Overview of change	Date approved by governing board
1	October 2025	New policy updating West Berkshire Council Model policy	



1. Purpose

In line with The Castle School's statutory duties under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 to safeguard children, we are required to carry out a number of checks on all staff, whether they are permanent, temporary, casual, voluntary, school based supply or agency based supply.

2. Applicability

This policy applies to all employees, governors and volunteers working in the school. This policy does not form part of any employee's terms and conditions of employment and is not intended to have any contractual effect. It is provided for guidance to all member of staff at The Castle School who are required to familiarise themselves and comply with the contents.

3. Policy

This policy sets out the school's approach to Safer Recruitment in line with its responsibilities as outlined in Part 3 of the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance. This policy does not incorporate all aspects of KCSIE and should therefore be read in conjunction with it and the school's policies.

This school is committed to using robust, rigorous and fair recruitment and selection practices to appoint the best people to work in the school, to help deter or reject unsuitable applicants from applying for and gaining positions within the school, and to ensure that the workforce is fully committed to the safety and welfare of children in a safe and secure school environment.

The aims of this policy are:

- ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- ensure safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral factor at each stage of the recruitment and selection process;
- adopt a safer recruitment process, which helps to promote a safe culture and complements other 'safety' elements such as health and safety and school security;
- attract and recruit suitably skilled and motivated staff to help raise standards and reduce the risk to children and young people;



- ensure that those that are responsible for each stage of the recruitment process demonstrate a professional approach by dealing honestly, efficiently and fairly with all applicants;
- ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, race (which covers colours, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, disability or age;
- ensure compliance with all relevant recommendations and guidance including the recommendations of the DfE in the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" guidance and the Code of Practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- ensure that we meet our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves, and complying with, the provisions of this policy.

4. Personal Data – Single Central Record

We hold a central record incorporating all employed staff (and other including volunteers, teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff) who have contract with children.

The central record will also include all members of the Governing Board.

The record is available to the Senior Leadership Team, the Chair of Governors, Chair of Student and Staffing committee and the Governor responsible for safeguarding. It will also be available for inspection by the local authority as well as Ofsted

The record details a range of checks as set out by the DfE, including the short listing and pre-employment checks outlined in this policy and the dates that they were carried out. The responsibility for the maintenance of this record is with the Headteacher but the function may be delegated.

The school will remove individuals from the central records once they no longer work for us.

5. Equal opportunities

Fairness in how we recruit and select our staff plays a significant part in creating an equal opportunities environment. Our aim is that every internal and external applicant who applies for a position within the school is considered against criteria, which relates only to the requirements of the job.



6. Safeguarding statement

Information sent out to all candidates for appointment will include the following statement:

"The Castle School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment and is in line with guidance in KCSIE. All shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a criminal records self-disclosure form. Successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS) checks along with other relevant checks including online searches to help to identify any incidents and/or issues which may be relevant to your suitability for the role, which the school may want to explore further with you."

7. The recruitment and Selection process

The governing board will appoint a selection panel consisting of at least three of its members (excluding the head teacher) to appoint a head teacher or a deputy head teacher. It will seek, and have regard to, advice from the local authority and external HR & Employment Law advisory service.

The governing board has delegated responsibility to appoint all other staff to Headteacher.

Governors may be invited to attend and be involved in recruitment and selection panels for staff in the school.

The head teacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school. All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that the school environment is safe and secure for children and that appropriate procedures are followed.

The governing board, head teacher and recruitment panels will ensure that the statutory guidance contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education is adhered to.

7.1. Safer recruitment training

Safer recruitment training became mandatory for the recruitment of school staff from 1 January 2010. This means a recruitment panel must have at least one member who has completed the training; or where an individual is in charge of recruitment, that



individual must have completed the training. It is the responsibility of schools to comply.

An e-learning course is available from the NSPCC on-line at safer recruitment in education course, or face to face training can be booked through the Local Authority.

The school will adhere to local authority / HR & Employment Law advisors guidance and ensure that staff and governors are suitably trained to undertake safe recruitment.

7.2. Recruitment advertising

Adverts for vacancies will demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding in recruitment, promoting the welfare of children and vetting procedures, protecting every potential applicant from unfair practice and ultimately safeguarding children as much as possible. Promoting commitment to safeguarding and child protection can act as a deterrent to would-be abusers. Thought will be given to wording, pictures and images used to ensure that they could not be considered discriminatory.

The following information will usually be included within the text of the advert:

- name of the school
- post title
- hours of work
- grade or scale
- salary (actual salary for part time)
- permanent or fixed term (stating duration if fixed term).
- brief details about what the job entails and the type of skills and experience required, including responsibility for safeguarding children.
- The school commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- confirmation that an Enhanced DBS check will be required.
- confirmation of whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- contact details
- closing date

In the case of a vacancy for a head teacher or deputy head teacher, the governing board must advertise the vacancy or post in such manner as it considers appropriate, unless it has good reason not to. The governing board will seek advice from the local authority / HR & Employment Law advisors (and the diocesan authority, where relevant) before deciding not to advertise.



7.3. Job description and person specification

Job descriptions and/or person specifications will define the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the post, as well as the qualifications, skills, abilities, attitude, behaviours and experience needed to perform the job, with particular attention to working with vulnerable groups. The Job Description and Person Specification will make reference to our commitment to the safeguarding of students and include the extent to which the role will involve contact with children and whether it engages in regulated activity.

The job description and person specification will state that all posts at the school will require an Enhanced DBS check where an individual is likely to come into direct contact with pupils.

7.4. 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)
- The following statement is on all application forms:

This School is committed to safeguarding children and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We will ensure that all our recruitment and selection practices reflect this commitment and is in line with the guidance in KCSIE. All shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a criminal records self-disclosure form. Successful candidates will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks along with other relevant employment checks including online searches to help to identify any incidents and/or issues which may be relevant to your suitability for the role, which the school may want to explore further with you. As part of this check you will be asked to provide the school with details of your social media accounts e.g. Facebook and Instagram handles.

7.5. Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people who 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.

Any offer of employment will be made conditional upon a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check and Child and Adult Barred List check, where applicable to the role in question.

7.6. Seeking references and checking employment history

The purpose of obtaining a reference is to ensure that we have objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will normally be taken up on shortlisted candidates prior to interview, particularly for teaching staff and many support staff roles, including staff who may already be employed by the school. This is to support the interview panel in exploring all potential concerns at interview, however, in all other cases, references will be obtained shortly thereafter.

Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which we deem satisfactory, one of which must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second referee should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. Neither referee should be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend.

All referees will be asked the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post, and whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. All referees will be sent a copy of the Job Description and Person Specification for the role that the applicant has applied for.

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. We will seek verification that the references has been completed by the author themselves independently from the candidate
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
- 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
- Never accept references from family or friends of the applicant.

7.7. Online searches

We will carry out an online search for all shortlisted candidates. This will look at information that is publically available online. This will usually be conducted before interview. This will include looking at any social media accounts that the candidate may hold.

The interview will provide the school with an opportunity to discuss any relevant information found as part of this check with the candidate.

7.8. Prohibition check

Following successful interview, the school will carry out the necessary prohibition checks for all teaching staff and for all candidates appointed within a classroom based job role, irrespective of whether the role permits for unsupervised "teaching work" as defined by The Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012. This check will provide verification that the candidate has not been prohibited from teaching or carrying out teaching work by the Teaching Regulation Agency in the past.

7.9. Section 128 Prohibition check

The School will carry out a Section 128 check on candidates short-listed for a roles that includes management responsibilities, to ensure that they have not been prohibited or restricted from participating in the management of a school.



8. The interview and Selection process

8.1. Identification documents at interview

Candidates invited to interview will be required to present photo identification, regardless of whether that interview is to be conducted face-to-face or remotely. If the interview is held remotely via video conference, photo identification must be shown on screen. The successful candidate will then be required to provide us with that photo identification as well as a number of other documents, as part of the pre-employment checks, we are required to complete.

8.2. Interview

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and will explore their suitability to work with children. A face-to-face interview will always be carried out as part of the recruitment process unless exceptional circumstances apply.

The interview panel will consist of a minimum of two interviewers, one of whom will be the safeguarding representative who will have completed their safer recruitment training.

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

The interview panel will use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post by asking structured questions covering the key areas as outlined in KCSIE, and will be alert to areas that may be concerning, such as:

- implication that adults and children are equal;
- lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children;
- inappropriate idealisation of children;
- inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children; and
- indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours.

Short-listed candidates will also be required to physically sign a hard copy of their application at the point of interview.



8.3. English fluency

Employees working in any role that requires them to communicate with pupils, parents, guardians, staff and / or members of the community, must be able to speak fluent English to enable the effective performance of the role and to ensure that they are able to abide by their safeguarding responsibilities.

The fluency duty does not create a higher standard than already required for Teachers at the school who are already annually appraised against the Teachers Standards.

9. Conditional offer of employment

Following the interview and selection process any offer of employment with the school will be conditional on the satisfactory completion of the following:

- the receipt of at least two satisfactory references;
- satisfactory Enhanced DBS check and where the appointee has lived outside the United Kingdom, a certificate of good conduct (or equivalent) if applicable;
- where applicable, satisfactory DBS checks in respect of the Child and Adult's Barred List;
- confirmation of the candidate's medical fitness (through a pre-employment health check);
- verification of qualifications by the individual by providing original certificates;
- verification of professional status where required;
- verification that the candidate has not been prohibited from teaching or carrying out teaching work and has no sanctions or restrictions against them, by the Teaching Regulation Agency where relevant;
- verification that the candidate has not been prohibited from carrying out management work where relevant;
- a satisfactory self-declaration of your criminal record and suitability to work with children in line with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- a satisfactory online search [including social media] made against the candidate in line with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- verification that the candidate has not been disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018, where applicable to their role;
- letter of professional standing from the overseas professional regulating authority where relevant;
- verification of the candidate's identity;
- verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK.

A record will be kept on the single central record (SCR) to show that the above checks have been carried out for all employees.



The details of checks will be reported to the police and/or the DBS if:

- the Enhanced DBS check shows that an applicant has been disqualified from working with children;
- an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, their application; or
- there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children gained from other legitimate information sources (e.g. references).

10. Pre-employment checks

10.1. Documents confirming identification

In accordance with the recommendations of the DfE, we carry out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees to ensure effective safeguarding.

All offers of employment are conditional on the prospective employee bringing the necessary evidence of identity to enable us to verify their name (through the full birth certificate where available), date of birth and current address. Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other mechanism (e.g., marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. In all cases original documents (not photocopies) must be provided.

These identification documents may also be used to enable a DBS check to be carried out (see below).

10.2. Criminal Record Check

Due to the nature of the work, we apply for criminal record certificates from the DBS in respect of all prospective staff members and volunteers.

The type of check that may be requested from the DBS will depend on the nature of the position. If the individual is applying for a position that may provide them with an opportunity to engage in regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults, then an Enhanced DBS check including Child and/or Adult's Barred List information.

This check will contain details of all convictions, cautions, reprimands, or warnings (except those which are "protected" as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2013 and amended in 2020) held on the Police National Computer.



The Enhanced DBS check with applicable Barred List information will also reveal whether the individual is barred from working with children by virtue of their inclusion on the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children.

An Enhanced DBS check may also contain non-conviction information from local police records and/or protected information (as defined above) which the police consider may be relevant to the work the individual will be undertaking.

The school will not retain copies of the DBS certificate or records of criminal information disclosed to them, unless where there is a valid reason for doing so. In these circumstances, these copies will not be kept for longer than six months.

10.2.1. DBS update service

Where the candidate states that they have a DBS which is signed up to the update service and is at the same level as the one that we obtain for candidates then the school will make use of the DBS Update Service.

Before conducting any online status check via the DBS Update Service, the candidate's consent will be obtained. This consent will be recorded and retained on file.

The school will verify that the original DBS certificate matches the identity of the individual presenting it, by checking valid and approved forms of identification.

The original DBS certificate will be physically examined to confirm that:

- it is valid for employment within the children and adult workforce;
- the level of the check (i.e. Enhanced, including Child and Adult Barred List information, is appropriate for the role being undertaken.

An online status check will only be accepted where the original DBS certificate meets the above criteria and there has been no change recorded on the DBS status.

The school retains the right to request a new DBS check if the certificate is not suitable or if the Update Service check indicates a change in status.

10.3. Overseas Check

Where a candidate has lived or worked overseas for a period as determined by the School and West Berkshire Council, additional checks will be conducted to determine their suitability to work with children. These checks will include obtaining a certificate of good conduct or equivalent criminal record check from the relevant jurisdiction(s), wherever reasonably practicable.



Where it is not reasonably practicable to obtain satisfactory overseas information, the school will carry out a risk assessment to determine whether it is appropriate to proceed with the appointment.

11. 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.

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

12. Agency staff, Contractors, Governors and Volunteers

We expect supply, temporary worker agencies and contractors that are used by the school to register with the Enhanced DBS Disclosure on their own account and to follow this policy or their own comparable policy. Proof of registration will be required before we will commission services from any such organisation.



Under no circumstances will an individual with whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or be allowed to work in regulated activity with children and/or vulnerable adults.

12.1. 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.

12.2. 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.

12.3. Trainee / student teachers

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



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

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

12.4. Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
- With pupils aged under 8 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

12.5. Governors

The same shortlisting and pre-employment checks will be undertaken, where appropriate, on all members of the governing board upon appointment. This includes but is not limited to: an enhanced DBS check with Child and Adult barred list information, where in addition to their duties they also engage in regulated activity. All governors have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

All governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a maintained school governor).

12.6. Staff working in alternative provision settings

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



12.7. 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.

13. Retention of records

If an applicant is appointed, we will retain any relevant information provided on their application form (together with any attachments) on their personnel file. This file will be stored by us for up to 6 years following termination of employment.

If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will normally be confidentially destroyed after 6 months, unless the applicant specifically requests us to keep their details on file.

Any queries relating to the policy above should be directed to the Headteacher.

Last reviewed: Autumn 2025

Next review date: Autumn 2028