

WHITEHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL



SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY POLICY

2025-2026

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Insert Name	K. Gill		Signature	15.10.25

Whitehall Primary School

Safer Recruitment Policy

Overview

A safer recruitment policy is of paramount importance for schools/colleges to ensure the well-being and security of their students and staff. Such policies are designed to meticulously screen and select potential employees, mitigating the risk of hiring individuals with harmful intentions or inadequate qualifications. By implementing thorough background checks, reference verifications, and interviews, schools can create a safer environment, safeguarding children from potential harm and risk. Moreover, a stringent recruitment policy fosters a culture of trust and accountability, reassuring parents and the community that the school takes their responsibilities seriously. Ultimately, a safe and nurturing environment enhances learning outcomes and contributes to the holistic development of students.

Whitehall Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children in our care. The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education alongside the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and our standards and ethos.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of Whitehall Primary School's Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff within our school, this includes;

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021 (KCSIE), Safer Working Practice Guidance (Safer Recruitment Consortium) the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- To ensure that the School meets its 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 with and complying with the provisions of this policy. Our School has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process will ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at our school is based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance as outlined above.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process. Whitehall Primary School aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at Whitehall Primary School.

1. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of our Governing body and Senior Leadership Team to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with KCSIE 2025 and legal requirements.
- Monitor the School's compliance with them.
- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school including online searches as part of due diligence (shortlisted candidates will be made aware of all checks carried out).
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.
- Attend training in Safer Recruitment which is regularly updated

2. Recruitment and Selection Procedure

It is vital that as part of our whole school/college approach to safeguarding, our governing body and proprietors create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children in their school/college. As part of this culture, it is important that we adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in our school/college.

Our Governing body/proprietors ensure that those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training, the substance of which at a minimum cover the contents of KCSIE Part 3 – Safer Recruitment.

3. Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement. Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and all documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR Regulations.

4. Application Forms

Whitehall Primary School uses the Eteach application Form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role. (In addition to this, all applicants are required to account for any

gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Applicants submitting an incomplete application form will not be shortlisted.

The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. CVs will not be accepted.

It is unlawful for our School/college to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at our School. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.

Whitehall Primary School will provide a copy of our Safeguarding and Children Protection Policy and practices and policy on employment of ex-offenders in our application pack or refer to a link on our website.

5. Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role. The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities, and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with the children in Whitehall Primary School and will contain a section on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in our school.

6. Shortlisting

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records, further information can be found on GOV.UK ¹. This information will only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information will not be requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the 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. Schools and colleges should inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be carried out as part of due diligence checks. See Part two KCSIE 2025 - Legislation and the Law for information on data protection and UK GDPR – ICO Guidance. [For organisations | ICO](#)

7. References

The purpose of seeking references is to allow employers to obtain factual information to support appointment decisions. Our school/college will obtain references before interview, where possible, as this allows any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

¹ [Guidance on the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by our school. One of the references 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 reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked 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. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

Our school/college does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

8. Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, (circumstances and environment permitting) and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria and in line with Safer Recruitment Training.

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form. At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

Name of School's Staff/Governors who have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training are: Anna Boychuk (Headteacher) and Jagrup Ruprai (Deputy Headteacher / Governor).

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed as soon as possible after the recruitment process.

9. Offer of employment and new employee process

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE 2024 and Safer Recruitment Consortium, our School/college carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees. If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating our School's standard terms and conditions of employment.
- verification of the applicant's identity (if not previously been verified);
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which our School considers to be satisfactory.

For positions which involve "teaching work":

- the School being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency (formerly National College for Teaching and Leadership), or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching

- profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working at the School or which, in the School's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the School; and
- the School being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at the School or which, in the School's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the School;
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the School considers to be satisfactory.
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List;
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education at a school, taking part in the management of an independent school or working in a position which involves regular contact with children;
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent school;
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role;
- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
- any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
- verification of professional qualifications which the School deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where not previously verified).
- Where a position amounts to "regulated activity" our school will consider which checks are appropriate, however, it is likely that in nearly all cases, our school will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.
- A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.
- KCSIE 2024 states that Annex A, as a minimum, will be explained to staff as part of their induction and will be made aware of systems within their school/college which support safeguarding. To include (not exhaustive):
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Schools behaviour policy
 - Staff behaviour policy/staff code of conduct
 - Safeguarding response to children who are absent from education
 - Role of DSL and identity of all DSL's in school/college
 - Appropriate Safeguarding and Online Safety Training

10. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at Whitehall Primary School.

11. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check

Whitehall Primary School applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the School which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an

applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

- It is Whitehall Primary School's policy that the DBS disclosure must be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee.
- It is the Whitehall Primary School's policy to re-check employees' DBS Certificates periodically and in addition to this, any employee who takes leave for more than three months (ie maternity leave, career break etc) must be re-checked before they return back to work.
- Members of staff at Whitehall Primary School are aware of their obligation to inform the Business Manager/Office Manager or the HR Department of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.
- DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

12. Portability of DBS Certificates Checks

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £13 per annum (no charge for volunteers), which is payable by the applicant. This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers. Our School will;

- Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search.
- Confirm the Certificate matches the individual's identity.
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, ie enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.
- The Update check would identify and advise whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial Certificate was issued. Applicants will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

13. DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers, therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificate to Whitehall Primary School (for employees within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity).

14. Dealing with convictions

Our School operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions;

- Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:
 - the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
 - how long ago the offence occurred;
 - one-off or history of offences;
 - changes in circumstances,
 - decriminalisation and remorse
- A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with HR and a decision will be made following this meeting. 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 HR will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.
- If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the Whitehall Primary School may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

15. Secretary of State Prohibition Orders (Teaching & Management roles)

In all cases where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind, a Prohibition Order check will be made using the Employer Access Online Service. It is anticipated that this will be performed at offer stage. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in such a setting.

Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Pending such consideration, the Secretary of State may issue an interim prohibition order if it is considered to be in the public interest to do so. A section 128 direction 39 prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an independent school.

A person who is prohibited is unable to participate in any management of an independent school, a governor on any governing body in an independent school, or a management position that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities. A check for a section 128 direction will be carried out using the Teacher Services' system. Where the person will be engaging in regulated activity, a DBS barred list check will also identify any section 128 direction.

16. Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving license etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The establishment does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (eg marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. In addition to this, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

17. Medical Fitness

Whitehall Primary School is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at our school after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed. All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. 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.

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

18. Overseas checks

The School, in accordance with the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will, if applicable, sponsor new foreign nationals. In addition, applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal record check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by the School.

19. Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, KCSIE 2025 Part 1/Annex A, Safer Working Practice Guidance, Safeguarding Training and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities. Details are outlined in our Staff Induction Checklist and our Staff Safeguarding Induction Checklist for all new employees.

20. Single Central Record (SCR) of Members of Staff

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and on individual personnel files, a SCR record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by Fatma Patel, Office Manager. The SCR will contain details of the following;

- All employees who are employed to work at the school;
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly or through an agency;
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, eg sports coaches etc.
- A designated Governor and or member of HR Team will be responsible for annually auditing our SCR and reporting their findings to the full Governing Body during the Summer Term meeting. Our SCR was last audited on 12.09.25 by Mandeep Judge - LCC HR Services.

21. Record Retention/Data Protection

Whitehall Primary School is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, our School will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the School to discharge its obligations as an employer, eg so that our School may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by our School for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the School. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Business Manager's Office in a locked and secure cabinet. The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with School activities.

Whitehall Primary School will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) [DPA 2018].

22. Ongoing Employment

Whitehall Primary School recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff.

23. Leaving Employment at Whitehall Primary School

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely, there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks, our School also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual;

- has applied for a position at the School despite being barred from working with children; or has been removed by the School from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to a child.
- If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, our School may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

24. Contractors and agency staff

Contractors engaged by the School must complete the same checks for their employees that the School is required to complete for its staff. The School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the School.

Agencies who supply staff to the School must also complete the pre-employment checks which the School would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at our School.

The School will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at the School.

25. Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires Whitehall Primary School to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised. The School is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children's Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity at the School or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of the School.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the School's usual visitors signing in protocol. This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitor's badge at all times and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments.

The School will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend the School. In doing so, the School will always have regard to the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism" set out in KCSIE 2025 which states;

'Extremism' is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs'.

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations, Whitehall Primary School does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

26. Volunteers

The School will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils at or on behalf of the School (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers). Under no circumstances will the School permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

It is Whitehall Primary School's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with the School for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the School on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the School to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates. Furthermore, the School will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following);

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview

27. Monitoring and Evaluation

Our School Senior Leaders will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the school. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit which will be presented at the FGB by the Headteacher.