

Safer Recruitment in Education

Purpose

The safety and welfare of all students at Next Steps Ed is our highest priority. This policy outlines our commitment to safer recruitment practices to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children. It provides guidance on the recruitment process to ensure compliance with legal obligations, statutory safeguarding requirements, and best practices in education.

Scope

This policy applies to all recruitment activities for:

- Employees (teaching and non-teaching staff).
- Volunteers and contractors working regularly with children.
- Agency and third-party staff.
- Governors and trustees.

Statutory Framework

This policy complies with the following statutory and regulatory requirements:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- The Education Act 2002.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

Key Principles

At Next Steps Ed, we are committed to:

- Creating a culture of vigilance where safeguarding is embedded in all recruitment practices.
- Ensuring all staff and volunteers have undergone thorough pre-employment checks.
- Preventing discrimination by ensuring recruitment practices are fair, inclusive, and based on merit.
- Protecting the rights and privacy of applicants under the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Recruitment Process

Planning and Advertising

- Job descriptions and person specifications will include a clear statement about the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Adverts will highlight that the position is subject to safeguarding checks, including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Application Forms

- Only standard application forms will be accepted; CVs alone will not be sufficient.

- Application forms will request a full employment history, including any gaps, and details of referees.

Shortlisting

- Shortlisting will be conducted by at least two individuals to ensure consistency and fairness.
- Applicants will be assessed against the criteria outlined in the person specification.
- Shortlisted candidates will be asked to explain any gaps in employment history during the interview process.

References

- References will be requested before the interview for all shortlisted candidates, where possible.
- At least one reference must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer.
- Referees will be asked specific questions about the candidate's suitability to work with children and any safeguarding concerns.

Interviews

- Interviews will include questions designed to assess the candidate's suitability for the role and their understanding of safeguarding responsibilities.
- At least one panel member will have completed safer recruitment training.
- Candidates will be asked about any gaps in their employment history or concerns arising from references.

Pre-Employment Checks

The following checks will be carried out for successful candidates:

- Enhanced DBS Check: Including a barred list check where appropriate.
- Identity Verification: Using official documentation.
- Right to Work in the UK Check.
- Qualifications Check: Ensuring relevant qualifications are valid.
- Prohibition from Teaching Check: For all teaching staff, conducted via the Teacher Services system.
- Overseas Checks: For individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK.
- Medical Fitness Check: To confirm the candidate is fit to work.
- Section 128 Check: For senior leadership positions.

Record-Keeping

- A single central record (SCR) will be maintained to document all pre-employment checks for staff, volunteers, and contractors.
- Copies of identity and qualification documents will be securely stored in line with data protection regulations.

Safeguarding Responsibilities During Recruitment

- All recruitment materials will clearly state the school's commitment to safeguarding.
- Candidates will be informed that safeguarding is a priority during the recruitment process.

- Any safeguarding concerns or inconsistencies arising during recruitment will be investigated and documented.

Training

- At least one person on every recruitment panel will have completed accredited safer recruitment training.
- Staff involved in recruitment will receive regular updates on safeguarding and safer recruitment practices.

Volunteers, Contractors, and Agency Staff

Volunteers

- Volunteers working regularly with children will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.
- A risk assessment will determine whether unsupervised volunteers require additional checks.

Contractors

- Contractors working in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS check.
- Identity checks will be conducted for all contractors entering the premises.

Agency and Third-Party Staff

- Written confirmation will be obtained from the supplying agency that all required safeguarding checks have been completed.
- The identity of agency staff will be verified on arrival at the school.

Induction

All new staff and volunteers will receive a comprehensive induction program that includes:

- The school's safeguarding and child protection policies.
- Code of conduct and professional expectations.
- Training on how to recognize and report safeguarding concerns.

Managing Allegations Against Staff

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the school's safeguarding and child protection policy will be followed. This includes reporting the allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further investigation.

Monitoring and Review

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and ensure compliance with statutory requirements. This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body and updated in response to changes in legislation or best practices.

Key Contacts

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mica Smith
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Olivia Campbell
- Safer Recruitment Lead: Mica Smith

This policy reflects Next Steps Ed's commitment to safeguarding and ensuring that all recruitment processes promote the safety and well-being of children.

Policy Review Date: 10th December 2025

Policy Approved By: Mica Smith - Director