



SOMERHILL

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Owner: HR

Reviewed: September 2021

Next Review: September 2022



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Safer Recruitment Policy

Introduction

The Governors are aware of and acknowledge their duties under Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 as amended in 2009. Guidance to school of their duties is found in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020. This guidance has been used to implement and oversee a recruitment and vetting procedure to reduce the probability of an unsuitable person being employed by Somerhill. To this end, the Governors have drawn up this policy outlining the recruitment process. They have also ensured that resources are provided to ensure that there will always be a member of staff, and when appropriate, a governor trained in safer recruitment on an interview panel. A list of governors/members of staff who are qualified in “Safer Recruitment” is listed in this document.

The school also recognises its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU) (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, when an employer collects personal data about an applicant during a recruitment process, whether this is directly from the applicant or from a third party such as a recruitment agency. We provide the applicant with an information notice, setting out certain required information, including the purposes for which the data will be processed, the legal bases for processing and the period for which the data will be retained.

Guidelines to steps in recruitment procedure

Action	Responsible	Notes
1. Role to backfill agreed	Principal, BM Head of DL, HR	Agree if backfilled like for like. If new role outside of budget approval of HR committee sought by HR
2. Hiring manager agreed	Department Head, Deputy	
3. Vacancy and advertising strategy agreed by Principal/HR	HR	



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<p>4. HR will arrange: 5. Advertisement drafted and approved by SLT 6. Advertisement placed in agreed format/media</p>	<p>Hiring Manager and HR</p>	<p>Job specification to be drafted and signed off Advert to include Somerhill application form and job description. For senior roles Recruitment brochure.</p> <p>Advertisement must include the words “Somerhill is committed to the safeguarding and promoting of the welfare of children and young people. All applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Services.” The advertisement must also specify how to apply and the closing date for applications, together with “Interested persons are advised to apply at their earliest convenience as the School reserves the right to appoint an individual before the closing date.”</p>
<p>7. Response to Vacancies</p> <p>GDPR</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>BM</p>	<p>A response of acknowledgment to all applications</p> <p>A letter (example attached) must be included with these forms which must draw the attention of the potential candidate to the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policy on the website and the need to declare any offences, spent or unspent. It should be made clear that any declaration of an offence/s should be enclosed in an envelope marked “Private & Confidential” and addressed to HR, s and will not be opened unless the candidate is invited for interview. If the application is unsuccessful, the envelope will be destroyed at the end of the recruitment process.</p> <p>Application packs must include the following statement:</p> <p>“Candidate Privacy Notice All information you supply will be treated in the strictest confidence and used solely for the purpose of reviewing suitability for the advertised role.</p> <p>Applications will be reviewed individually; the School does not use any automated decision-making processes.</p>



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		<p>If your application is deemed unsuitable all information supplied by you will be destroyed immediately.</p> <p>Information supplied by candidates who attend for interview but are unsuccessful, will be held for a maximum period of six months and will thereafter be destroyed.</p> <p>Should another suitable role arise within 6 months we may advise you via the data you have supplied.”</p>
8. Responses received	HR	<p>Response to be processed by HR</p> <p>Any letters marked “Private & Confidential” to be held, unopened by HR</p>
9. Application review	HR and Hiring Manager	<p>Applications will be reviewed in the light of the job description and person specification</p> <p>a)If a CV is included, are the two documents consistent? Check consistency of dates and qualifications.</p> <p>b)Have any gaps in employment been suitably explained? If not, this must be raised at interview.</p> <p>c)Has the candidate had any very short employments? It may indicate a problem, and this should be raised at interview.</p> <p>Once the selection process has been completed, the candidates selected will be checked against any envelopes received. No envelopes will be opened unless the candidate is selected for interview. Unopened envelopes will be destroyed</p>
10. Unsuccessful applications	HR	<p>All unsuccessful candidates should be informed via email</p> <p>In accordance with GDPR all personal data of unsuccessful applicants to be destroyed</p>
11. Invitation to interview	HR	<p>The email invitation sent to candidates inviting them to interview must include the following:</p> <p>a)Directions to the school’s Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy on the Somerhill website.</p> <p>b)Request to bring Proof of identity</p>



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		<p>d)Must include the following - If you are disabled and need any adjustments for the interview [or any assessment process] please contact HR</p> <p>e)If permitted via the Application Form, notification that references will be taken up and previous employers may be contacted. It must be confirmed by the Head and/or the nominated person with the referee that they provided the written reference.</p> <p>f)Candidate's programme for the interview day if appropriate.</p> <p>g)Who will be conducting the interview.</p> <p>NB A minimum of two interviewers to be present for any interview, one of whom should have received training in safer recruitment</p> <p>All the information that is required is included in the explanatory notes sent with the application form and candidates must be referred to this document.</p>
12. Interview	All	<p>In accordance with best practice, the interview panel will have a set of agreed questions and must ensure that the form and process is broadly the same for all interviewees.</p> <p>Questions should not, to any extent possible, be open-ended, and be strictly in accordance with safer recruitment. Interviewers must always act within the laws governing discrimination and aspire to best practice.</p>
13. Post interview	Hiring Manager/HR	<p>A verbal offer of the role will be made by the Hiring Manager. Pay is confirmed with the Business Manager. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed by the Hiring manager or HR.</p>
14. Acceptance	HR	<p>Before pre-employment interview the individual will be sent:</p> <p>Formal offer letter including the following:</p> <p>1. Confirmation of any post is subject to satisfactory completion of DBS check at enhanced level, prohibition order checks with the Department of Education and European Economic Area (Teaching only) and completion of Child Protection training.</p>



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		<p>2.A Declaration – where supervision of children under 8 may form part of their role- that they have not been disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018</p> <p>3.If involved in management, checking of “section 128 directions” to ensure the individual is not prohibited from management of/in independent schools.</p> <p>4.Details of any probationary period</p> <p>5.Satisfactory medical fitness</p> <p>6.Verification of right to work in the UK</p> <p>7.If not already acquired, satisfactory references (see Annex B for form).</p> <p>8.Terms of payment including pension, school fee discount or any other negotiated benefit as part of their salary compensation package.</p> <p>9.Where appropriate, holiday entitlement if it differs from the standard entitlement.</p> <p>The successful candidate will receive an invitation to undertake pre-employment/DBS checks and a requirement to bring relevant/required qualifications. All documents must be original and, if in a different name, the appropriate document to prove change of name (e.g. marriage certificate).</p> <p>Included in the ‘offer pack’ will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health questionnaire • Staff contact details including Next of Kin notification • Salary payment form – Bank details • Form confirming receipt and understanding of Somerhill Staff Policies which includes the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and KCSIE Part 1 • Starter checklist <p>These forms must be completed and returned prior to the DBS check.</p>
15. Pre-employment verification	HR/Deputies/ Head of DL/ Head of Pre-	HR will ensure all pre-employment checks have been completed and will populate the appropriate Code A/G/S form



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	Prep/ Principal	<p>Employment History will be reviewed and signed off by an interviewing Safer Recruitment trained member of staff.</p> <p>References will be reviewed and signed off by Safer Recruitment trained staff.</p> <p>The completed Code form will be signed off by HR.</p> <p>All checks will be reviewed as follows: Non-teaching support staff (BM); DL section (Head of DL); YC section (Deputy Head, Pastoral); Pre-Prep (Head of Pre-Prep).</p> <p>Final sign off/ "Approval to Start" will be granted by the Principal.</p>
16. Single Central Record/Register ("SCR")	HR	HR shall ensure the update and upkeep of the SCR.
17. Before starting	HR	<p>Advise all necessary staff involved in the Induction of the new staff.</p> <p>Inform IT of new joiners and send photo for the staff pass. HR to pass all relevant forms and letters to Accounts for paying.</p>

Members of Staff qualified in safer recruitment

The following members of staff have completed Safer Recruitment training:

Duncan Sinclair	-	Principal
Amanda Mcknight	-	Head of Pre-Prep
Helen Hoffmann	-	Head, Derwent Lodge
Carly Froggatt	-	Deputy Head, Somerhill Pre-Prep
Clare Morey	-	Business Manager
Vincent Rapley	-	Assistant Bursar
Jess May (from 6/12)	-	HR Manager



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Governors qualified in safer recruitment

Diane Huntingford	-	Chair of the Board of Governors
Helen Tebay	-	Governor

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him/her from employment within the School. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the School to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. The School will report the matter to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- the School receives an application from a disqualified person;
- is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or
- the School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children

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 School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;



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- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- in the case of disqualification from providing childcare, whether the applicant has or can obtain an Ofsted waiver from disqualification; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving, driving recklessly or without due care and attention.

Application and Recruitment Process Explanatory Note for Candidates

1. General

Somerhill ("the School") is committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the children and young people in its care. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

The School aims to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

All queries on the School's Application Form and recruitment process must be directed to the HR.

2. Application Form

Applications will only be accepted from candidates completing the relevant Application Form in full. CVs will not be accepted in substitution for completed Application Forms.

Candidates should be aware that all posts in the School involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post. Applicants will receive a Job Description for the role applied for.



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As the job for which you are applying involves substantial opportunity for access to children, it is important that you provide us with legally accurate answers. Upfront disclosure of a criminal record may not debar you from appointment as we shall consider the nature of the offence, how long ago and at what age it was committed and any other relevant factors. Please submit information in confidence enclosing details in a separate sealed envelope which will be seen and then destroyed by HR. If you would like to discuss this beforehand, please telephone in confidence to the HR for advice.

Please disclose any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings. Please note that the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service website.

The successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure Form from the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") for the post. Additionally, successful applicants should be aware that they are required to notify the school immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children.

The school takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children must notify [the school/their manager] immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings he/she may receive. He/she must also notify the school immediately if he/she is living in a household where anyone lives or works who has been disqualified from working with children or from registration for the provision of childcare.

Failure to declare any convictions (that are not subject to DBS filtering) may disqualify you for appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light subsequently.

If you are currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, your current employer will be asked about disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young persons (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether you have been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and if so the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure.

If you are not currently working with children but have done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues. Where neither your current nor previous employment has involved working with children, your current employer will still be asked about your suitability to work with children. Where you have no previous employment history, we may request character references which may include references from your school or university.

You should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if you have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.



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3. Invitation to Interview

Applicants will be short-listed according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. Short-listed applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

All formal interviews will have a panel of at least two people chaired by the Head or another designated senior member of staff. The Chair of Governors should chair the panel for the Head's appointment. The interviewers involved will be required to state any prior personal relationship or knowledge of any of the candidates and a judgement will be made by the Chair as to whether an interviewer should therefore withdraw from the panel. Should the Chair have a conflict of interest, the Vice Chair shall decide whether the Chair should withdraw from the panel.

The interview will be conducted in person and the areas which it will explore will include suitability to work with children.

All candidates invited to interview must bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post (e.g. the original or certified copy of certificates, diplomas etc.). Where originals or certified copies are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained by you from the awarding body.

All candidates invited to interview must also bring with them:

18. A current driving licence including a photograph or a passport;
19. Where appropriate any documentation evidencing a change of name;
20. Where the candidate is not a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area or Switzerland, proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK.

Please note that originals of the above are necessary. Photocopies or certified copies are not permissible.

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview should inform the School of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

4. Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

21. Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received);
22. Verification of identity and qualifications including, where appropriate, evidence of the right to work in the UK;
23. A satisfactory enhanced DBS check and if appropriate, a check of the Barred List maintained by the DBS;
24. For a candidate to be employed as a teacher, a check that that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or within the European Economic Area (EEA);



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25. Verification of professional qualifications;
26. Verification of successful completion of a statutory induction period (for teaching posts - applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999) where relevant;
27. Where the successful candidate has worked or been resident overseas, such checks and confirmations as the School may consider appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered including criminal records checks for overseas applicants - Home Office guidance can be found on GOV.UK; and for teaching positions, obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked. Advice about which regulatory or professional body applicants should contact is available from the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom, UK NARIC;
28. Satisfactory medical fitness as per our Health and Safety policy.
29. If you are undertaking a leadership role, Section 128 check to ensure that you have not been prohibited from participating in the management of independent schools.

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

5. References

We will seek the references referred to in section 4 above for shortlisted candidates and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview. If you do not wish us to take up references in advance of the interview, please notify us at the time of submitting your application.

All referees will be asked if the candidate is suitable to work with children.

The School will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the application form. Any inconsistencies will be discussed with the candidate.

6. Criminal Records Policy

The School will refer to the current revision of the Department for Education ("DfE") document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and any amended version in carrying out the necessary required DBS checks.

The successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure Form from the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") for the post. Additionally, successful applicants should be aware that they are required to notify the school immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children. This includes any staff who are disqualified from childcare or registration including 'by association' i.e., they live in the same household (or someone is employed in their household) as someone who has unspent cautions or convictions for a relevant offence.



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The School complies with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice, a copy of which may be obtained on request or accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>.

7. Retention and Security of Records

The School will comply with its obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under its Data Protection Policy. Copies of DBS certificates will not be retained for longer than 6 months.

8. Application for ETC/QTS status

Some overseas qualified teachers can apply to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) for the award of qualified teacher status (QTS/ETC) in England.



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1. LETTER IN RESPONSE TO EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Dear []

Thank you for your expression of interest in [post] at Somerhill.

Please acquaint yourself with Somerhill Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Statement which is available on the school's website (www.somerhill.org). It is also important that you declare any spent or unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs in a separate envelope marked "private & confidential" and addressed to the HR (for further explanation see both the application form and the explanatory notes). The envelope will be kept separate from the process of selection and will only be opened in the event of your being selected for interview.

To be considered for the post, please return the correctly completed application form no later than []. We expect to inform successful candidates by []. Interviews will be held in the week commencing [].

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

2. INVITATION TO INTERVIEW – SHORT LIST

Dear [name]

Thank you for your application for the post of [position applied for] at [school].

I confirm that we would like you to attend an interview for this post on [date] at [place] at [time].

The interview will be conducted by [names of interviewers].

Please bring with you verification of your name and address which may be from any of the following documents. Only originals will be accepted.

- A current driving licence including a photograph and paper counterpart or a passport;
- A utility bill or financial statement showing your current name and address;



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- Where appropriate any documentation evidencing a change of name;
- If you are not a citizen of a country within the European Economic Area or Switzerland, proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK.

The School normally takes up references prior to interview (for teaching posts). If you do not want us to contact your current employer at the present time, please inform us as soon as possible. If we do not hear from you by [date] we will proceed with the reference request.

If you are disabled and need any adjustments for the interview [or any assessment process] please contact {insert name, ideally someone who is not involved in the recruitment decision}.

If you have any queries regarding the interview, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

3. LETTER TO REFEREES

IN CONFIDENCE

Insert name and address of referee

Insert Date

Dear

RE: *NAME OF CANDIDATE*

[Insert Name of candidate] has applied for the position of *[insert job title]* at *[Insert School name]* and has given your name as a referee. I would be grateful if you could complete the enclosed reference form and return it to me at the school, to arrive by *[Insert date]*. We will be conducting interviews for this appointment on *[Insert date]* and, in accordance with government guidance on recruitment in schools, we are seeking references prior to interview.

This guidance (which is aimed at ensuring safe recruitment) also requires me to ask you a number of detailed questions relating to *[Insert candidate's name]* suitability for the job and for working with



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children. To assist you, I enclose a copy of the Job Description [and Person Specification]. I would request that you are as detailed as possible and to ensure that the reference does not contain any material misstatement or omission. You should be aware that the factual content of the reference may be discussed with the candidate.

As part of the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, I also need to ask you to provide me with information relating to *[Insert candidate's name]* disciplinary record and any allegations that have been made against them.

Thank you for your help and assistance in this matter and I look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Yours sincerely,



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REFERENCE FORM

IN CONFIDENCE

TO <name of referee and position in organisation>	
Request for a reference in respect of	
In regard to an application for	
Please confirm the following details	
The applicant's period of employment with you	
From <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> to <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/>	
The applicant's current or most recent post with you:	
The main duties and responsibilities of that post:	
The applicant's reason for leaving your employment:	



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b. Children and young people
Are you completely satisfied that the applicant is suitable to work with children?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If No, please provide specific details of your concerns and the reasons for your doubts:
To the best of your knowledge has the applicant ever had an allegation made against them, or been under investigation, in regard to his/her behaviour towards children?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, please give full details of the nature and date(s) of the allegation(s), by whom they were investigated, what conclusion was reached as a result of the investigation, whether any action was taken and if so what that was.



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Has the applicant been the subject of a disciplinary action in respect of which penalties or sanctions remain in force?

Yes

No

If Yes, please give full details of the nature and date(s) of the misconduct, and of the penalty or sanctions still in force.

Has the applicant been subject to any disciplinary action relating to his/her suitability to work with children when penalties or sanctions were imposed but have since expired?

Yes

No

If Yes, please give full details of the nature and date(s) of the misconduct, and of the penalty of sanctions that were imposed.



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Would you re-employ the applicant?

Yes

No

If No, please say why

Signature:

Printed Name:

Date:

Position:

Organisation: