

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England VC Primary School

Life in all its fullness

Safer Recruitment Policy

The *Safer Recruitment Policy* was reviewed during the Autumn Term 2023.

This document is the result of that review.

Updated to take into account *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)*.

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FGB/COMMITTEE:	Staffing Committee
NOMINATED GOVERNOR:	Miss Angela Britten
HEADTEACHER:	Mrs Kay Bridson
SIGNED: (Chair of Governors)	
TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH:	<p><i>This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding policies.</i></p> <p><i>This policy should be read alongside Wiltshire Council HR Policies.</i></p> <p><i>This policy should be read alongside the following national government policies:</i> <i>Working together to safeguard children July 2018</i> <i>Keeping children safe in education</i> <i>Keeping children safe in education Part 1 and Annexe A</i> <i>Prevent Duty Guidance updated April 2021</i></p>

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The school's policy for the screening of new employees and volunteers complies with the relevant legislation and guidelines, such as:

- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', Department for Education (DfE), July 2018
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE), DfE, September 2023
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales updated 2021 (the Prevent Duty Guidance), HM Government
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (2015), DfE, March 2018
- Codes and guidance published by the Disclosure and Barring Service
- The Education Act 2002
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- The Police Act 1997
- Protection of Children Act 1999 and Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000
- The Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012

1 Introduction

Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of all its pupils. In this context, our aim is to ensure that the policies and the procedures we follow in the selection and appointment of staff and volunteers comply with the latest regulations and guidance on safer recruitment, and that the principles of safer recruitment are embedded in our collective thinking and practice throughout the school.

This policy is, therefore, an essential element in our efforts to create a safe and supportive environment for pupils, staff and all others within our school community. It aims to ensure that the selection and appointment of all staff and volunteers is both fair and safe by:

- helping to attract the best possible candidates
- deterring prospective candidates who are unsuitable from applying for vacancies
- identifying and rejecting any candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children and young people.

The policy has been updated in the light of the latest edition of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023. It reinforces the principles set out in the Code of Conduct for staff, including the school's Whistleblowing policy and the emphasis on the active promotion of Fundamental British Values and on the duty to prevent extremism and radicalisation. As part of their induction, all successful candidates for paid or volunteer employment will receive training on the school's Safeguarding policy and procedures, including the Code of Conduct for staff.

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

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to:

- ensure the School has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
- monitor the School's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and staff involved in recruitment to:

- 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.
- monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

The Governing Body has delegated responsibility to the Headteacher (teaching staff) to lead in all appointments. School Governors may be involved in staff appointments but the final decision will rest with the Headteacher.

2 Highlighting safeguarding in advertisements and post details

2.1 Advertisements for staff appointments, whether paid or unpaid, will include the following statement:

'Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. An enhanced DBS check is a pre-requisite for all appointments.'

2.2 All statements of 'Post details' which are provided for prospective applicants will contain the following statement:

'Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils, and this is a responsibility that is shared by all members of staff. The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. Please also see the section on Disclosure below.'

3 Training in Safer Recruitment

3.1 At least one member of the selection panel for any appointment made at Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School will have successfully completed training in Safer Recruitment within the last 5 years.

3.2 All staff at Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School who receive training in Safer Recruitment for this purpose will be expected to renew their training every 5 years.

4 Promoting Fundamental British Values

The essential principles of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and respect and tolerance for others, including those with different faiths and beliefs, which together have come to be known as the Fundamental British Values, have always been integral to our school ethos. As a school, we are committed to promoting these values and to ensuring that they inform everything we do.

It is equally important that the presentation of political issues, whether in the classroom or in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, should be fair, balanced and open-minded.

We are also keenly aware of the statutory duty on all school staff, as part of their wider Safeguarding responsibilities, to be vigilant and pro-active in protecting pupils from the risk of radicalisation and of being drawn into extremism. These principles are set out in the Code of Conduct for staff; they are also stated in the information which is provided to prospective applicants for all teaching and non-teaching posts at Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School.

5 Information for prospective applicants

5.1 Prospective applicants will be provided with a detailed statement of the Person Specification and Job Description along with the Local Authority's application form. There they will also be directed to the school website where they will encouraged to access all of the school's safeguarding policies.

5.2 Prior to interviews, candidates will be asked to acquaint themselves with the safeguarding policy documents on the school website.

6 The selection and recruitment process

The following procedures will be adopted for all staff employed by Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School in any capacity.

6.1 All prospective employees are required to submit a completed Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School's application form and a covering letter. (A *curriculum vitae* on its own is not accepted in place of the completed application form.) These will be checked by the member of Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School's staff who is making the appointment and any gaps or discrepancies will be followed up. The application form will be kept on file.

6.2 Candidates who submit an application on line will be asked to sign the form if called for interview.

6.3 Evidence of relevant qualifications (e.g., QTS, degree certificates, etc.) will be required (see point 6.9).

6.4 All shortlisted candidates, including internal applicants, are required to give the names and contact details of at least two referees, one of whom must, wherever possible, be the person's current or most recent employer. Formal, written references will be sought directly from the referees. Once received, these will be authenticated by a phone call to the supplier of the reference, who may also be asked to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Where this is the case, detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges. Where information about past disciplinary action or allegations is disclosed, it will be considered as part of a suitability assessment.

6.5 Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted in order to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies. Where this is the case, detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges.

6.6 Referees will be asked a number of questions including specific questions about the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people; any substantiated allegations; any disciplinary warnings (including time-expired warnings relating to the Safeguarding of children and young people); the candidate's suitability for the post. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised so that they do not support terrorism or any form of 'extremism'.

6.7 Wherever possible, references will be requested in advance of interview. All references will be kept on file.

6.8 In all cases, references will be carefully scrutinised by the senior member of staff leading the selection process for that particular appointment. Any gaps, apparent discrepancies or concerns will be followed up as appropriate with the applicant and referee(s).

6.9 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 six months after the recruitment programme. The applicant's identity will be checked as part of the interview.

6.10 All prospective employees and volunteers are required to seek an enhanced DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) whether or not their post requires them to be engaged in a 'regulated activity'. (Section 7 of this policy outlines the activities regarded as 'regulated activity'). This is made clear in the advertisement and in the published post details, and again when an offer is made to the successful candidate.

6.11 All initial contracts are subject to a satisfactory outcome of the DBS check and other pre-employment checks.

6.12 In accordance with the School Staffing (Amendment) Regulations 2006, where there is a break in employment of more than three months for a member of staff, a new enhanced DBS check will be sought.

6.13 All prospective appointments will be checked against the 'Barred List' before the appointment is confirmed.

6.14 All prospective appointments for teaching posts will also be checked using the Teachers Services System to verify qualified teacher status (QTS) and the completion of teacher induction and teacher probation periods.

6.15 Successful candidates are sent a Health questionnaire along with their letter of appointment. They are asked to complete and return the questionnaire at the same time as their signed contract. Among other things they are asked to confirm (or otherwise) that they are mentally and physically fit to carry out the responsibilities associated with the post.

6.16 All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the School's Data Protection Policy.

6.17 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, where possible, avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

7 Regulated Activity

As outlined in the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', an enhanced DBS certificate, which includes barred list information, is required where the person will be engaging in regulated activity. A person will be considered to be engaging in regulated activity if, as a result of their work, they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- will carry out paid or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- engage in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

Regulated activity includes:

a) teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children,

b) work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places', which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers;

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly.

A **supervised** volunteer who regularly teaches or looks after children is not engaging in regulated activity.

For all other staff who have an opportunity for regular contact with children who are not engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate (which does not include a barred list check) will be sought. This would include contractors who would have the opportunity for supervised contact with children and who work under a temporary or occasional contract. Where a contractor has unsupervised contact with children an enhanced DBS certificate which includes a barred list check will be sought.

8 Safeguarding-related questions during the selection process

In the course of selection interviews, and among other things, candidates will be expected to be ready to:

- explain any gaps in employment;
- explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel;
- declare any information that is likely to appear on the DBS disclosure;

- demonstrate their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people and their ability and willingness to promote fundamental British values;
- satisfy us that they do not hold radical or extremist views and that they do not have any sympathies, links or association with any groups or organisations that espouse such views.

9 Employment checks

An offer of appointment will be conditional and all successful candidates will be required to:

- provide proof of identity;
- complete an enhanced DBS form and receive satisfactory clearance;
- provide proof of professional status / qualifications;
- complete a health questionnaire;
- pass prohibition checks (Teacher Services' System)
- provide an employment history and satisfactory references
- provide proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK;
- obtain an overseas police check in the case of anyone who within the last five years has lived or worked outside the UK, whether or not the individual concerned is a British citizen.

Prohibition from management (Section 128) checks: these will be carried out on all prospective appointments for management positions. More detail on the types of appointments for which this check must be carried out is given in paragraph 6.15 above.

In the case of candidates from the European Economic Area (EEA) who will be carrying out teaching work, we are also required to carry out a check to establish whether they are subject to a sanction or restriction imposed by another EEA professional regulating authority for teachers.

All checks will be noted on the school's Single Central Register of appointments (SCR).

The successful candidate will commence their employment subject to all checks and procedures having been satisfactorily completed. In certain rare circumstances, and exceptionally, a new member of staff may be allowed to start work before the DBS disclosure has been received. In these cases, an LA risk assessment will be carried out. Details of the procedure that must be followed in such circumstances are set out in section 12 below.

Checks for all prohibitions, sanctions and restrictions described at paragraphs 122-129 are carried out by logging onto the Secure Access/DfE Sign-in Portal via the Teacher Services' web page.

As all staff work with young children, the appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations. This is recorded on the SCR.

10 Notice periods

Each staff member's contracts of employment will state what his or her notice period is, both during the probationary period and once this is successfully completed where these are different.

For all teachers who do not have peripatetic, fixed term or probationary contracts (which may specify a different period of notice) the period of notice is one full term's notice on either side, with employment terminating at the end of the term following the term in which notice was given.

In all other cases, the notice period will be as stated in the staff member's contract of employment.

11 Record-keeping

- The school holds and maintains a Single Central Register of appointments (SCR) which complies with all current regulations and which contains records of all the required documentation and checks for all staff, regular volunteers and governors.
- Files on all staff are held centrally and securely by the HR Administrator.
- DBS checks will be carried out by one of two counter-signatories: the HR Administrator or the Headteacher.
- All references on staff will normally be requested by the HR Administrator and returned to her in the first instance. Any discrepancies will be followed up as appropriate. The date on which a reference has been verified will be noted on the reference and recorded on the SCR.
- The HR Administrator is also responsible for a regular check of the HR section of the Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School's SCR and for chasing up any documentation that may be missing.
- Schools do not have to keep copies of DBS certificates in order to fulfil the duty of maintaining a single central record, and it is Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School's policy not to do so. Copies of the other documents, such as those used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work in the UK and required qualifications will be kept for the personnel file.

12 Allowing a new member of staff to start work before receipt of DBS disclosure

Offers of employment at Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School's are always predicated upon the receipt of a satisfactory DBS disclosure. We conduct our own DBS checks even where the new member of staff has a current disclosure from another school. The following standard wording appears in all our offers of employment. It makes clear that the appointment is not definitively confirmed until such time as the disclosure has been received.

'Please note that this offer of employment is subject to a satisfactory outcome to the DBS checks that, as a school, we are obliged to request on all our staff, and that the school is entitled to end this employment without notice in the event of any details resulting from the DBS Disclosure which in the school's opinion render you unsuitable for employment involving work with children and young people. Please see the section on Disclosure below. The offer is also subject to satisfactory receipt of proof of qualifications and (where relevant) evidence of meeting visa requirements conferring the right to work in the UK.'

'DISCLOSURE

Please note that, as Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School's meets the requirements in respect of exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, all applicants who are offered employment are asked to apply for an enhanced disclosure of criminal background from the Disclosure and Barring Service ('DBS') before their appointment is confirmed. This will include details of cautions, reprimands and final warnings, as well as convictions. Criminal records will be taken into account for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. Further information about the disclosure scheme can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/dbs. This offer of employment is, therefore, subject to satisfactory completion of the checks that we shall need to undertake with the DBS. The school is entitled to end this employment without notice in the event of any details resulting from the DBS Disclosure which, in the school's opinion, render you unsuitable for employment involving work with children and young people.'

Starting work

We will normally seek to ensure that we have received the DBS disclosure before a new member of staff takes up his or her position. Exceptionally, however, there may be a strong operational need for a newly appointed member of staff to take up his or her position before we have received the disclosure. Under current regulations, a short period of work is allowed under controlled conditions, at the head's discretion. In such circumstances, the following steps will, in all cases, be followed before the member of staff is allowed to start work:

1. The appointment will not be confirmed, in the sense that it will explicitly remain subject to a satisfactory outcome of the DBS checks. The standard wording cited above which appears in all offers of employment covers this point.
2. The DBS application will be submitted before the new member of staff starts work.
3. The suitability of the newly appointed member of staff is checked against the Barred List.
4. In the case of a newly appointed member of the teaching staff, a check is conducted against the Prohibited List to ensure that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State. The check is carried out using the Employer Access Online service, 'Prohibited List'.
5. A note of the above checks is made on the Single Central Register of appointments (SCR).
6. At least two satisfactory references must have been received and verified.
7. A written risk assessment is put in place and approved by the Headteacher in each case. The risk assessment will be kept on the relevant person's HR file.
8. The risk assessment sets out appropriate safeguards to be put in place, such as appropriate supervision.
9. The member of staff concerned is informed of these safeguards.
10. The safeguards are reviewed regularly, at least every two weeks, until the relevant DBS is received.

13 Induction

13.1 All newly appointed staff are provided with paper copies of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and of Part 1 of the most up to date version of Keeping Children Safe in Education with their contract of employment. The latter makes explicitly clear that, by signing and returning the contract, the newly appointed staff member also confirms that s/he has read and understood the safeguarding documents sent with it.

13.2 As part of their induction, all new members of staff and volunteers will receive information on the school's Safeguarding Policy, including the list of staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, the policy and procedures relating to Whistleblowing and guidance on safer working practices as set out in the Code of Conduct for staff. This is done as follows:

- Staff who take up their employment at the start of the academic year will be given a full Safeguarding training session as part of the Inset days which take place just before the start of the autumn term. This will usually be delivered by the DSL or by one of the other members of the school's designated safeguarding team, all of whom have taken part in a 'training the trainer' course delivered by the WSCB.

13.3 Staff who take up their employment during the course of the academic year:

- are given a short Safeguarding induction session on their first day in post, or as soon as practically possible thereafter. The session, which will be delivered by one of the members of the Safeguarding team, focuses on the main elements of the school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures, including the list of staff with designated responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection, the policy and procedures relating to Whistleblowing, guidance on safer working practices as set out in the Code of Conduct for staff and on what to do if they have reason to think that there may be a safeguarding or child protection issue;
- will be required to take part in the next available full Safeguarding training session. These are arranged at intervals, as and when needed through the year, and usually delivered by the DSL or one of the other members of the school's Safeguarding team.

14 Supply staff

Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School does not use agency staff. Teachers covering staff absence undergo the same checks as permanent staff.

15 Peripatetic staff

Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School will require that all necessary checks and DBS requirements have been satisfactorily completed for peripatetic staff.

16 Volunteers and Governors

All regular volunteers and governors are subject to an enhanced DBS check. The school contacts the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) Teacher Services to check if a person they propose to recruit as a governor is barred as a result of subject to a section 128 direction.

17 Contractors

Stratford-sub-Castle Primary School will require that all necessary checks and DBS requirements have been satisfactorily completed for regular contractors. All other contractors are closely supervised when onsite. Every effort is made for the contractors to be on site when the children are not.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if made necessary by new or amended regulations or guidance.