

Safer Recruitment Policy 2022/2023



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
SCOPE	3
AIM.....	3
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	3
PROCEDURE	4
DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POLICY.....	10
APPENDIX.....	11

1. INTRODUCTION

Hopwood Hall College is committed to providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults. This policy provides a framework which incorporates the advised nationally recommended safeguarding practices, ensuring robust and rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, precluding unsuitable applicants from gaining a position at the College. This policy has been developed in accordance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance 2022.

2. SCOPE

2.1 Hopwood Hall College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners and colleagues. There is a requirement that all colleagues, volunteers and third parties who are associated or affiliated to the organisation have the same level of commitment to safeguarding and recognise its importance to us an organisation.

2.2 This policy provides the minimum standards that all staff involved in the recruitment process must adhere to so that candidates for both paid and unpaid (i.e. volunteer) roles are the right people and that they are suitably checked to ensure the risks for employing them to work with vulnerable groups is limited. This policy also provides guidance on procedures for reporting any concerns.

2.3 Recruitment agencies must also meet the college's standard of safer recruitment as outlined in this policy.

2.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's Safeguarding and DBS Policies.

3. AIM

The aim of this policy is to protect young people and vulnerable adults by ensuring that safer recruitment practices throughout the organisation are being carried out and that all involved in the recruitment process are aware of the minimum standards used for recruitment and selection. A safer environment will be created by:

- increasing the awareness of safeguarding issues
- training and educating colleagues
- highlighting the safeguarding policies and procedures in place
- taking concerns seriously and providing a method of reporting them

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 The HR department is responsible for undertaking all recruitment activity in line with this policy and supporting recruiting managers through all stages of the recruitment process including supporting recruitment panels.

4.2 All individuals involved in the recruitment, selection and management of staff are responsible for ensuring that the procedures outlined are followed. Individuals making separate arrangements for candidates outside of this policy will be compromising the college's safeguarding obligations and could result in disciplinary action.

4.3 Candidates are expected to follow the procedures set out in this policy and the DBS Procedure. Failure to meet the standards set out in these policies may impact on their employment at the college.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Vacancies

5.1.1 The recruiting manager or agency has the responsibility to make sure that every vacancy is accurately and realistically defined when it goes out to the marketplace. The criteria for shortlisting and interviewing will be based on the job description, person specification/role profile and competencies.

5.1.2 Job adverts should include the following:

- The skills, abilities, experience, attitude and behaviours required for the post
- The safeguarding requirements, i.e. to what extent the role will involve contact with children and if they will be engaging in regulated activity relevant to children or vulnerable adults.
- The College's commitment to safeguarding and that safeguarding checks will be undertaken including a DBS check
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and person specification
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

5.2 Job Applications

5.2.1 Applications will require as a minimum the following information:

- Personal details including current and former names, current address and national insurance number
- Relevant academic/professional/vocational qualifications, date and awarding body
- Full chronological history of full or part time employment since leaving secondary school, including:
 - voluntary work, education and training.
 - reasons for leaving jobs
 - reasons for any gaps in employment
- Two referees, one of which must be the current or most recent line manager, plus an additional referee from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If references are not available (i.e. school leavers in first employment), education and voluntary work references will be requested where possible

5.2.2 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to posts which involve working with young people and/or vulnerable adults or their records. Therefore, some convictions, cautions or bind-overs that would normally be considered 'spent' must be declared when applying for this type of post using the following questions:

- Do you have any unspent conditional cautions or convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974?
- Do you have any adult cautions (simple or conditional) or spent convictions that are not protected as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2020?

5.2.3 Applicants with professional qualifications and registration to regulatory bodies must provide details of registration

5.2.4 Applicants should be informed on the application form or elsewhere that it is an offence to apply for a regulated role at the College if they are barred from working with children (or vulnerable adults if in a role where this applies).

5.2.5 Applicants should be sent a link referring them to the College Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedure and the DBS Procedure which contains the Recruitment of ex-offenders policy.

5.3 Shortlisting

5.3.1 Managers must shortlist candidates for job roles having regard to the extent to which candidates meet the person specification. The panel must score each applicant against the person specification/role profile for the job using a shortlisting form. Managers must scrutinise applications and identify any inconsistencies, gaps in employment history and concerns and follow up any concerns with the candidate at the interview.

5.3.2 Online checks will be done on candidates by HR for all shortlisted candidates with any concerns followed up at interview (see Appendix 4 for process and form).

5.4 Self-Disclosure

5.4.1 The organisation's DBS Procedure encourages early disclosure by candidates. This gives candidates an opportunity to share relevant information at an early stage and allows information to be discussed and considered as soon as possible. Offences that are declared will be individually explored confidentially via the HR Department.

5.5 Interviews

5.5.1 The interview panel should consist of at least two people who are directly employed by the organisation and at least one should be safer recruitment trained (renewed every 3 years).

5.5.2 The assessment criteria and method of assessment (including presentations, activities, micro-teaches etc.) should be considered based on the requirements of the

person specification and taking into account any adjustment needs of the applicant. Advice must always be sought from HR regarding the use of tests

5.5.3 Structured interview questions should be asked including questions to find out what attracted the candidate to the role and their motivation for working with students, exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with students which are relevant to the role. A safeguarding question must also be asked to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children and if relevant vulnerable adults.

5.5.4 Interview good practise should always be followed:

- Welcome and introduction to the panel by the recruiting manager
- Responses to interview questions should be recorded and scored.
- The panel should probe gaps/frequent changes in employment/vagueness/areas of concern
- Any concerns that have arisen from social media checks should be discussed
- The candidate should be given the opportunity to ask questions about the role and the College
- At the end of the interview the next stage in the process should be outlined i.e. informing the candidate of the outcome and timescales.
- All information considered and decisions made should be clearly recorded.

5.6 Pre-employment checks

For every appointee, the HR Department will complete the following pre-employment checks:

5.6.1 Identity

- Verification of the candidate's identity using photo ID such as a passport or driving license

5.6.2 Right to Work

- Verification of the person's Right to Work in the UK in line with the Home Office Right to work checklist
- If the individual has a temporary right to work with an end date, they will be notified in writing that the continuation of their contract will be dependent on their right to work in the UK.

5.6.3 DBS/Barred List check

- An enhanced DBS check including child barred list check (and adult barred list check for those working in regulated roles with vulnerable adults) will be obtained. If undertaking a DBS Update Service check the DBS certificate on which the check is based must be viewed and consent to do the check obtained.
- Where a DBS check or an applicant's declaration reveals they have 'spent' or 'unspent' criminal convictions, cautions and reprimands or prosecutions

pending in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and subsequent amendments, the College DBS positive disclosure procedure must be followed.

- A separate Child barred list check will be obtained prior to the DBS check

5.6.4 References

When the offer of appointment is made, at least two satisfactory references are required, these must be obtained directly from the previous employer. At least one reference must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer, plus an additional one for the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working in education). Requests are made by HR using a standard reference request form and include questions on:

- the candidate's suitability for the post
- details of any disciplinary offences against children/vulnerable adults or if there have been any safeguarding concerns and their outcomes
- reason for leaving
- the referee's relationship to the candidate
- whether the referee is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with young people/vulnerable adults.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations must be considered in the circumstances of the individual case and the 'Less than Satisfactory Reference' form completed (see appendix 3).

See Appendix 1 for Reference Checking Guidance and Appendix 2 for Risk Assessment where references are missing

5.6.5 Health declaration

- The candidate is required to complete a health declaration form indicating their ability to carry out their work responsibilities
- Anyone declaring that they have a condition that may affect their ability to do their role will be referred to Occupational Health for a further assessment. The employee, line manager and HR will be informed of any recommended adjustments by the Occupational Health Adviser.

5.6.6 Overseas Checks

- Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff including an enhanced DBS with barred list check (even if they have not lived in the UK before). A criminal record check should also be considered for any countries where they have lived in recent years (see DBS Procedure for how to do this).

5.6.7 Prohibition from Teaching checks

- Prohibition from teaching checks will be done for all staff in teaching roles

- For staff who have lived overseas going into teaching roles, a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country/countries where they have worked should be sought to confirm that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions or are aware of any reason why they are unsuitable to teach.

5.6.8 Qualification checks

- Where required by the role, qualification certificates will also be verified and a copy saved on file

5.7 Offer and new starter process

5.7.1 The appointment of all new starters is subject to the receipt of satisfactory DBS (in line with the college DBS Procedure), references and other employment checks, this should be clear in the offer letter.

5.7.2 New starters are not permitted to commence employment until the necessary background checks are completed and they have been notified by HR that checks are satisfactory. Staff may be permitted to start whilst waiting for a DBS check to be completed if all other checks have been undertaken and a risk assessment has been put in place in agreement with the line manager (see DBS policy Appendix 1 employees starting before the completion of a DBS check).

5.8 Temporary worker provided by a recruitment agency

If the organisation needs to use a temporary colleague provided by a recruitment agency, prospective workers must undergo the necessary background checks including reference and DBS checks, however this will be taken up by the recruitment agency and details will be provided to the HR Department. Photo ID should be viewed to check identity on arrival.

5.9 Withdrawing the offer

Once an offer of employment has been made, it can be withdrawn if outstanding checks outlined in the offer letter once completed are not satisfactory. Offers can only be withdrawn with HR authorisation.

Where relevant, any concerns must be reported to a Designated Safeguarding Officer within the organisation and the designated Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

5.10 Staff Inductions

The induction process:

- provides training and information about policies and procedures
- supports individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged
- confirms the conduct of colleague and standards of behaviour the organisation expects and the methods in which issues can be reported
- provides opportunities for a new colleague or volunteer to discuss any worries or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and

- enables the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

5.11 Safer Recruitment Training

All managers will be required to undertake Safer Recruitment training as part of their general management responsibilities and all interview panels must have at least one member of staff who have undertaken the training. The training should be renewed every 3 years and records will be kept by HR.

5.12 Probation/managing new starter performance and conduct

All new employees are covered by the probation policy in their first few months of employment. Specific support and monitoring is put in place during this period to ensure they receive the required standard within their probationary period.

5.13 Managing allegations

If an allegation of abuse is reported, the College's Safeguarding Policy should be referred to.

5.14 Single Central Record (SCR)

The SCR provides details of all colleagues employed at the organisation, agency staff, voluntary workers, contractors and Governors and is maintained by HR. The SCR contains information on the following checks with dates when each check has been completed:

- Identity check
- An enhanced DBS check
- Separate barred list check if required
- Prohibition from Teaching check (for teaching roles)
- Checks if lived or worked outside the UK
- Professional qualifications (if required by role)
- Right to work
- Whether the person's position involves 'relevant activity' i.e. regularly caring for, training, supervising or being solely in charge of persons under 18.

Agencies supplying staff to the Hopwood Hall College will be required to confirm in writing that the required checks have been carried out and appropriate certificates seen.

Copies of DBS certificates are not retained once the DBS certificate has been seen and the DBS certificate number added to the Single Central Record. Copies of all other pre-employment check information is retained on the individual's electronic personal file.

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Updates to this policy will be made in line with new issues of Keeping Children Safe in Education and other Safer Recruitment good practice advice.

7. DOCUMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POLICY

Keeping Children Safe in Education

DBS Procedure

Safeguarding policy

8. APPENDIX

Appendix 1

Reference checking guidance

Guidance taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education (p44), Hopwood Hall College Safer recruitment policy (section 15.0) and Safer Recruitment training course.

We must obtain:

- Written references using the Hopwood Hall College reference request form
- At least 2 references with 1 from the most recent employer
- If the candidate is not currently working with children but has in past an additional reference from the last time they worked with children should be requested.

We cannot accept:

- Oral references
- 'Open' or 'to whom it may concern' references

References must be from:

- A senior person with appropriate authority

References must not be from:

- A colleague
- Family or friends

Check that:

- All questions have been answered satisfactorily
- The information provided is consistent with the application form (I.e. the role, dates employed and leave reason match)
- The email address used is legitimate and from the expected source

Actions:

- Keep a copy of the reference and the email that it was sent with and save in staff file
- Follow up on any discrepancies
- Contact referee if there is anything missing or you need to clarify something
- If the reference contains any information about past disciplinarys or allegations or safeguarding concerns consider carefully, obtaining advice where necessary and discussing further with referee and/or candidate as appropriate.
- Forward on to recruiting manager

Starting without required references

All employees are required to have reference checks completed prior to commencing employment in line with the College Safer Recruitment policy. It is recognised that in some instances it is not possible to obtain all the necessary references if these are not provided by previous employers, or there is no or little previous employment (I.e. in the case of school or college leavers). In these circumstances, this form should be used to determine whether it is appropriate for a new member of staff to start and if any further actions should be taken. Employees should not start where referees are available but have not been requested.

Name		Start date	
Role		Department	
Recruiting manager			
Detail the nature of contact with children/vulnerable adults in role			
Details of references already received including whether they were satisfactory			
References missing and action taken so far			
Other reason for lack of references (I.e. school/college leaver)			
Has the DBS been completed? (if no – do not proceed)			Yes/No
Is the DBS clear? (If no the non-clear DBS process should be followed)			Yes/No
Have all other pre-employment checks been completed and satisfactory?			Yes/No

Actions

Any further action to be taken

Approval

To be signed off by HR Manager. I confirm that this employee is allowed to commence employment

Name	Signed	Date
------	--------	------

A copy of this form must be sent to the line manager and also saved on the employee's HR file.

Appendix 3

Starting with a less than satisfactory reference

If any references requested are returned with any negative remarks or concerns this form should be completed and signed off by the HR manager. In these instances all other checks should be completed prior to the employee starting.

Name		Start date	
Role		Department	
Recruiting manager			
Detail the nature of contact with children/vulnerable adults in role			

Details of reference

Name of organisation providing reference	
Role undertaken	
Dates from and to	
Were they dismissed?	Yes/No
Were the concerns safeguarding related?	Yes/No
Summary of concerns	
If a follow up conversation took place with referee, please give details	
Was the information declared on the application form?	Yes/No

Other checks

Has the DBS been completed?	Yes/No
-----------------------------	--------

Is the DBS clear? (If no the non-clear DBS process should be followed)	Yes/No
Have we received other satisfactory references?	Yes/No
If no please give details	

Decision & Actions

If deciding to appoint, on what basis (this should be a joint decision between HR and line manager)
Any further actions?

Approval

To be signed off by HR Manager. I confirm that this employee is allowed to commence employment

Name	Signed	Date

A copy of this form must be sent to the line manager and also saved on the employee's HR file.

Online Candidate checks

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022, the College will undertake online searches of all shortlisted candidates as part of Safer Recruitment checks. These checks may help to 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.

Process

- Candidates will be informed on the job advert that online checks will be undertaken
- Online checks will be conducted by HR by doing a general search using the candidate's name (and any previous names they have provided).
- Any potential matches should be verified as much as possible by cross-referencing with location, employment history etc. mindful that it may be someone else with the same name.
- If anything of concern is found, the details should be documented on the following form and only relevant information should be discussed with the recruiting manager prior to interview
- Concerns should be discussed sensitively at interview giving the candidate the opportunity to respond and discuss context
- Following the interview, the decision to appoint should be taken with HR support who will help to determine if any adjustments or a risk assessment is needed to mitigate risk

Potential concerns

- Extreme views or opinions
- Hate or discriminatory behavior
- Negative behaviours such as bullying or excessive bad language
- Inappropriate or undesirable content
- Illegal activities
- Addiction/substance abuse
- Violent content or affiliations with organisations linked to violence or extremism
- Sexually explicit content
- Behaviour that may lead to reputational damage of the College such as leaking company information or content
- Anything else deemed out of line with Hopwood Hall College values

Other things to consider

- Need to be mindful of how old the information is
- The details found may relate to someone else with the same name so great care should be taken when discussing with candidate
- Checks should be done consistently for all candidates and over the same time period
- Other information that does not relate to their suitability to work at the College should not be considered (i.e. social life, political or other opinions or affiliations unless they fall within the concern category as detailed above).

Online checks

Candidate name	
Role	
Recruiting manager	
Date of check	
Details found	
Details of discussion with candidate (i.e. context)	
Further actions (i.e. risk assessment)	