

Schools Mutual Services – Safer Recruitment Policy

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

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This policy will be reviewed every 12 months (as a minimum).

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1. Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

Schools Mutual Services is committed to creating a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and [adults at risk]. In order to achieve this culture, we adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment.

2. Scope of the policy

This policy applies to anyone engaged by Schools Mutual Services including our directors, staff, contractors and any work placement/volunteers.

All prospective applicants will be supplied with copies of the Safeguarding Policy, Allegation Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy, Safeguarding Children and Adults at risk Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Code of Conduct.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Schools Mutual Services will:

- Prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by having effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of staff and volunteers in accordance with the DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 ([KCSIE \(as updated from time to time\)](#)) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS);
- Prevent people who are subject to a Section 128 direction (which prohibits or restricts a person who has previously been prohibited from teaching) from taking part in the management of an independent school, including academies and free schools, in accordance with the DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 ([KCSIE, paragraph 262 \(as updated from time to time\)](#)) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS);
- Ensure that it meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

4. Recruitment and Selection Process

All those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children will be trained to a recognised standard in safer recruitment.

Schools Mutual Services ensures at least one person who conducts an interview has completed training in safer recruitment.

5. Advertisements

When defining the role (whether through the job, role description and person specification) Schools Mutual Services will have regard to Section 214 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE 2025\)](#) and include:

- *the skills, abilities, experience, attitude, and behaviours required for the post; and*
- *the safeguarding requirements, i.e., to what extent will the role involve contact with children and will they be engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.*

All adverts will also include:

- Schools Mutual Services' *commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken;*
- *the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification; and*
- *whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013, 2020, 2023 and subsequent amendments.*

6. Application forms

All roles advertised by Schools Mutual Services will include (in the application form or elsewhere) the following statement:

"Schools Mutual Services is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post holders are subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. It is an offence to apply for the role if you are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children."

Schools Mutual Services will also ensure that all prospective applicants provide the following:

- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number;
- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving;
- full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment;
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award;
- details of referees/references;
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification; and
- a statement from the applicant sharing all relevant information about spent and unspent convictions, allegations, disciplinarys and investigations.

Schools Mutual Services does not accept curriculum vitae in place of application forms.

7. Shortlisting

In order to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow for this to be discussed at interview stage before the DBS certificate is received, all 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.

Schools Mutual Services will ensure the following:

- that at least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise.
- that reasons are given for any inconsistencies and for gaps in employment and reasons given for them; and
- all potential concerns are explored.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting Schools Mutual Services will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be conducted as part of due diligence checks. Any incidents identified or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, will be explored with the candidate at interview.

8. Employment history and references

All offers of employment made by Schools Mutual Services will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two written professional references, including the most recent assignments, covering at least 2 years worth's of assignment.

Schools Mutual Services follows strict standards and therefore will:

- not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern;
- not rely on applicants to obtain their references;
- ensure any references from the candidate's current employer have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, the reference should be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations);
- obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed;
- secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If the applicant has never worked with children, then secure further references (more than 2);
- always verify any information with the person who provided the reference;
- ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source;
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided; and
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate.
- establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post, and,
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

9. Employment selection

Schools Mutual Services uses a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for posts. All interview questions will include:

- finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children;
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role; and
- probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this.

All information considered in decision making will be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

10. Pre-appointment vetting checks

Schools Mutual Services completes all the following legal pre-employment checks when appointing an individual to engage in regulated activity in relation to children:

- Identity check (including being aware of any name changes and obtaining a birth certificate when available);
- Address check;

- National Insurance check;
- Disqualification under the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018 and Childcare Act 2006 checks and Section 128 Direction checks;
- An overseas police check (if relevant);
- Enhanced DBS check via the applicant (including children's barred list information);
- Verification of medical fitness;
- Verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK; and
- Verification of professional qualifications via the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) Employer Access Service, and verification of overseas trained teachers through the appropriate regulating authority in the country of deliverance.

10.1 Section 128 Direction Procedure

Schools Mutual Services will undertake Section 128 Direction checks, where required, in accordance with the Department for Education's *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* statutory guidance and any subsequent updates.

Section 128 Direction checks will be completed via the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) Employer Access Service for candidates applying to positions where such checks are required by legislation, including management roles within independent schools, academies and free schools.

Where applicable, the Section 128 Direction check will be completed prior to the commencement of any assignment, and the outcome will be recorded on the candidate's compliance record and retained in accordance with the Schools Mutual Services Record Retention Policy.

Where a Section 128 Direction is identified, or where the outcome of the check raises safeguarding or suitability concerns, the candidate will not be placed into any role for which the prohibition applies. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will review the outcome, undertake a risk assessment where appropriate, liaise with the client and any relevant regulatory bodies as necessary, and record all decisions and actions taken.

No placement will proceed until all Section 128 requirements have been satisfactorily met and Schools Mutual Services is satisfied that the candidate is suitable for the proposed assignment and that all statutory safeguarding obligations have been fulfilled.

11. Summary

Schools Mutual Services will make clients and candidates aware of the Safer Recruitment Policy through the following means. Schools Mutual Services will make clients and candidates aware of the Safer Recruitment Policy through its controlled document management system (SharePoint), staff induction and safer recruitment training, candidate onboarding documentation and Candidate Handbook, the Teacher Booker registration process where applicable, and by making the policy available to clients and candidates upon request. Material amendments to this policy will be communicated in accordance with the Schools Mutual Services Policy Review, Control & Communication Procedure.

All staff, temporary workers, candidates and contractors understand that the above checks must be conducted and must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other recruitment firms in order to safeguard children/adults at risk. The public interest in safeguarding children/adults at risk may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by Schools Mutual Services and its Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Appendix

List of relevant legislation and guidance governing this policy

Legislation/ Regulation/ guidance	Web Address
Keeping Children Safe in Education	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
Children Act 1989	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents
Care Act 2014	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents
The Children Act 2004	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents
Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/53
Children and Social Work Act 2017	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (including the 'Prevent Duty')	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents
Modern Slavery Act 2015	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents
Human Rights Act 1998	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31/contents
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 (Ratified by the UK in 1992)	https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (HM Government)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Prevent duty guidance: England and Wales (2023)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance
Care and Support Statutory guidance (as updated) (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance
Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers providing safeguarding services (as updated) (HM Government).	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf
Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium)	https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/files/ugd/f576a8_0d079cbe69ea458e9e99fe462e447084.pdf
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Guidance (HM Government)	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf
Local Safeguarding Partners/Arrangements	https://consult.education.gov.uk/child-protection-safeguarding-and-family-law/working-together-to-safeguard-children-revisions-t/supporting_documents/Transitional.pdf
