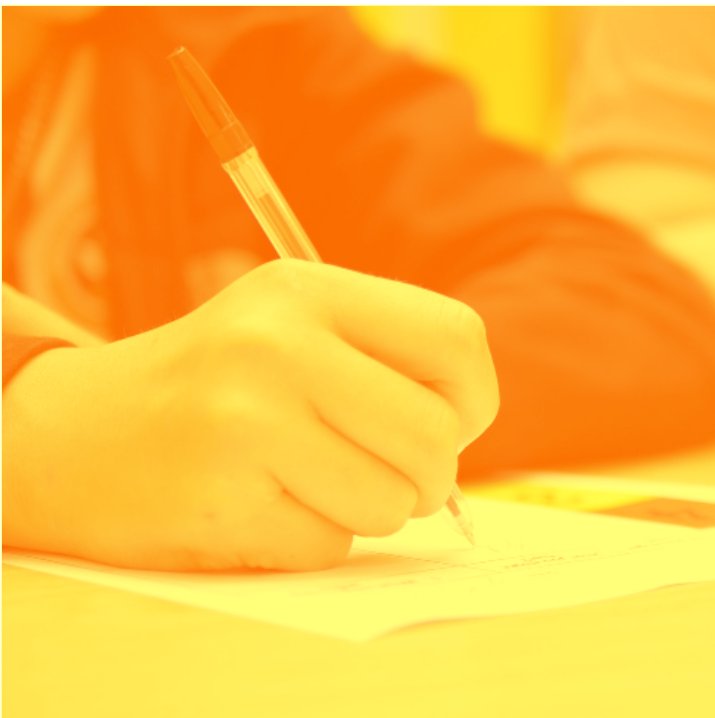




osmis

Mentoring & Inclusion Services

Safer Recruitment Policy





OSMIS Mentoring & Inclusion Services Safer Recruitment Policy

Date of Creation: Sept 2024
Date Reviewed: Sept 2025

1. What should this policy achieve?

1.1 This policy sets out the procedures used by OSMIS when seeking to recruit high quality staff. It acknowledges that this is a serious responsibility and that there are important statutory requirements that must be followed for key elements of this process.

1.2 This policy will ensure that OSMIS recruits and selects staff in a safe and fair manner at all times. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral requirement in the recruitment and selection process and ensures that only those suitable to work with young people are employed by the organisation.

1.3 The organisation will do this by basing its recruitment and selection procedures on the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance and reviewing safer recruitment guidelines and good practice on a regular basis.

2. What are the aims of this policy?

2.1 To attract, select and retain staff who will successfully and positively contribute to the work and development of the organisation.

2.2 To ensure that recruitment procedures prioritise safeguarding of children and meet the requirements of relevant legislation.

2.3 To ensure that appropriate checks and balances take place to ensure that only those suitable to work with young people are employed by the organisation.

2.4 To ensure that there is consistency of approach across the organisation.

2.5 To ensure that recruitment procedures are fair and transparent.

2.6 To ensure that recruitment procedures do not discriminate in any way.

2.7 To ensure sensitive documentation is stored with regard to Data Protection legislation.

3. Scope

3.1 Our organisation must follow the guidance set out within this policy for each stage of the recruitment process.

3.2 This policy will apply to the appointment of both permanent and temporary roles within the organisation, and set out the standards and stages for all recruitment activities.

3.3 The policy applies to all individuals involved in the recruitment process. Those involved at each stage of the recruitment process will demonstrate a professional approach by dealing honestly, efficiently and fairly with all internal and external applicants in line with the principles of public life.

4. Who manages the policy?

4.1 Andy Keenan (manager) and Carol Wilson (deputy manager) have overarching responsibility for ensuring that recruitment is carried out in line with the guidance set out in this policy.

4.2 OSMIS and HR experts LTD will work together in carrying out the day-to-day tasks associated with all aspects of the recruitment process.

4.3 Following the appointment of each new member of staff, they will be allocated an appropriate line manager to oversee their induction, training and support.

5. Planning the recruitment and selection process

5.1 Planning the recruitment and selection process is essential to maximise the opportunity for the organisation to attract applicants with the right skills, experience and values and minimise the risk of making unsuitable appointments.

5.2 Once the decision to recruit has been made, approval must be obtained in line with this policy.

5.3 Those involved in the recruitment and selection process will define the job role and the selection criteria to be used, as well as setting the timetable for recruitment.

6. Job descriptions and person specifications

6.1 The job description and person specification are essential tools and will be used throughout the recruitment and selection process.

6.2 A job description and person specification should be provided for all posts. The job description sets out the main duties and responsibilities of the post, whilst the person specification will detail the skills, knowledge and experience required to do it. The job description and person specification will include the level of contact which the post has with children, criteria regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children and information on the organisations commitment to safeguarding.

7. Adverts

7.1 The following minimum information will usually be included in adverts:

- Job title
- Salary – including pro-rata values if part-time or term-time only
- Hours of work and whether the role is full or part-time
- Proposed start date
- Whether the post is temporary or permanent
- Summary of the job role and minimum requirements
- How to access and return application forms
- Closing date for applications and interview dates
- The organisations right to close the advert early
- Information regarding the organisations commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken for the successful candidate including obtaining a satisfactory enhanced DBS check and children's barred list check.
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975 as amended. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account.

7.2 For all posts advertised externally the organisation should ensure that the following documents are made available to all applicants:

- The advert
- The relevant job description
- The relevant person specification
- The organisations application form
- Access to the organisations safeguarding policy and organisations website

8. Application Forms

8.1 All applicants for posts must complete the organisations standard application form. CVs will not be accepted as an alternative to the application form and will not be used for short-listing when submitted. The use of a standard application form ensures that a common set of core data is obtained from all applicants.

8.2 The application form will require applicants to provide:

- Their 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
- a statement of the applicant's personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

The application form will also include:

- a statement that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity with children.
- reference and a link to the organisations Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

8.3 The Equal Opportunities section will be removed from all applications as they arrive, so that they are not sent on to the recruitment panel prior to shortlisting.

8.4 Applications are confidential and should be kept safely locked away for reasons of data protection.

8.5 Unsuccessful applications will be destroyed after 6 months, in line with the organisations GDPR document retention policy.

9. Guidelines for shortlisting procedures

9.1 Short-listing will be undertaken by a minimum of two people.

9.2 The short-listing panel must contain at least one person who has received the appropriate Safer Recruitment training.

9.3 The use of short-listing grids is recommended, so that only those candidates whose application meets the required criteria will be interviewed.

9.4 Applications will be scrutinised carefully and the shortlisting panel will

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them.
- Explore all potential concerns

9.5 In addition, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 states that schools should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates prior to interview. The organisations approach to this is outlined in Appendix 1.

10. Guidelines for inviting candidates to interview

10.1 Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview and the interview notification should provide an outline of the activities for the day and who will be involved in the interview process.

10.2 At this point, shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that may make them unsuitable to work with children. This provides the opportunity for candidates to share relevant information. Information disclosed during the self-declaration process may be discussed at interview.

10.3 The information we will ask for in this declaration includes:

- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the children's barred list
- Whether they are prohibited from teaching
- Whether they are prohibited from taking part in management of an independent school.
- If they are known to the police and children's social care
- Have they been disqualified from providing childcare
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales.
- Any relevant overseas information

10.4 Where a self-declaration is submitted electronically, the applicant will be asked to physically sign it when they attend for interview.

10.5 This information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted and should not be requested as part of the application form to decide who should be shortlisted.

10.6 Where a shortlisted applicant discloses information which would make it unlawful for the school to employ that individual, the offer of interview may be withdrawn.

10.7 Employment references for shortlisted candidates will be requested prior to interview so that they may be available should they contain any information which the selection panel wish to discuss with the candidate.

10.8 The organisation will seek to obtain a minimum of two written references and these will be requested on a standard reference pro forma prior to interview. Referees should be able to comment on the applicant's suitability for the role being recruited to, including their suitability to work with children, and will be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. The organisation will seek to obtain at least one reference for internal candidates.

10.9 When seeking references we will:

- Not accept open references or rely on candidates to obtain their reference.
- Ensure references from the candidate's current employer have been completed by a Senior person with the appropriate authority.
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate.
- 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 we must have a reference from their current employer.

10.10 Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and discussed with the candidate at interview. All concerns need to be satisfactorily resolved before the candidate's appointment is confirmed.

11. Guidelines for carrying out interviews

11.1 Candidates will be asked to present their identification documents (in line with DBS guidelines) and proof of their qualifications prior to being shown around the relevant section(s) of OSMIS and introduced to the interview panel. One of the identification documents must be a photo ID. Copies of these documents should be taken and sent to the HR experts LTD

11.2 As per statutory requirements, all interview panels must contain at least one member who has received safer recruitment training.

11.3 In order to ensure that the recruitment process generates as wide a range of information as possible, there may be a task/ tasks in addition to interview questions.

11.4 Pupils should be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way. Observing short listed candidates and appropriately supervised interaction with pupils is common and recognised as best practice.

11.5 Prior to the interview the panel members should meet to:

- Reach a consensus about the required standard for the job to which they are appointing.
- Consider the issues to be explored with each candidate, including any issues, inconsistencies or gaps identified from the application form, the references and the self-declaration forms, and who will ask about each of those.
- Agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the job description and person specification including the standard questions that all candidates will be asked.

11.6 Interviews should be used to explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children.

11.7 All information related to each candidate's performance should be recorded along with decisions made. This information will be held and destroyed in line with the organisation's GDPR Document Retention Policy.

11.8 All unsuccessful candidates will be offered feedback on their performance (verbally or by email).

12. Guidelines for making an offer of employment

12.1 Every attempt will be made to make a decision on the day of the interview.

12.2 Every attempt will be made to contact all candidates by telephone so that they know the outcome on the day of the interview.

12.3 The organisation may choose not to appoint should none of the candidates meet the required standard.

12.4 Any verbal offer will state that it is made subject to certain checks and conditions being met.

12.5 Following a verbal offer, OSMIS will complete a notification of appointment form, which needs to be signed by the Manager. OSMIS will then send a copy of the fully completed notification of appointment form to the HR expert LTD without delay.

12.6 Once the signed notification of appointment form has been received, the HR expert LTD will prepare and send a written conditional offer to the successful candidate. This letter will clearly state that the offer is made subject to certain conditions being met, including the receipt of two written professional references.

12.7 The conditional written offer of employment will be accompanied by DBS documentation and forms related to the pre-employment checks, which candidates are required to complete promptly.

13. Pre- Appointment vetting checks

13.1 A DBS certificate must be obtained from the candidate as soon as practicable after an offer of appointment has been made and prior to them taking up their new post.

13.2 DBS checks are carried out by an external provider, using an online service to speed up the process.

13.3 An enhanced DBS together with barred list information must be obtained for all staff, along with an additional check against the prohibited from teaching list and the 'prohibited under the section 128 provisions'.

13.4 Enhanced DBS checks must be carried out for all volunteers with the inclusion of a barred list check if they are involved in regulated activity.

13.5 Other pre-employment checks In addition to the relevant DBS checks, the following checks must be completed for all new staff:

The receipt of at least two satisfactory written professional references. Referees will be asked to confirm if they believe the candidate is a suitable person to be working with children. This applies even where the post holder is not engaged in regulated activity, as they will be viewed by pupils as a 'safe person' if they are known as a member of staff.

- A written record of the candidate's full educational and employment history including reasons for any gaps.
- Verification of the candidate's identity.
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals.
- If the candidate has lived or worked outside of the UK, further checks should be made as appropriate. These checks will normally be carried out for any candidate who has lived or worked outside the UK for a period of three months or more in the last 5 years.

Further checks include:

- Overseas criminal records check or certificate of good conduct.
- References from any employment the applicant may have had whilst living overseas, particularly if they worked with children.
- Verification of educational and professional qualifications.
- Ensure that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State for prohibition checks or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE before its abolition in March 2012.
- Ensure that the candidate is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State.

13.6 New employees will not commence in the role until all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed.

13.7 All pre-employment vetting checks will be followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

14. Single central record

14.1 The organisation records all information about pre-employment checks as part of the online single central record.

14.2 The Single Central Record must contain the following information:

- Identity check
- Right to work in the UK check
- Barred list check
- An enhanced DBS check
- A prohibition from teaching check
- A section 128 check (where applicable)
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK
- Qualifications check (where applicable)

14.3 Checks on volunteers should also be included on the single central record. Child barred list checks will be recorded depending on whether the volunteer is involved in regulated activity.

14.4 Details of an individual should be removed from the Single Central Record once they no longer work at the organisation.

15. Guidelines about inducting new members of staff

15.1 Wherever possible, the successful candidate will be given the opportunity to visit OSMIS prior to taking up their new post, in order to provide an appropriate initial induction session.

15.2 The induction process will include a session with a senior leader, who will take the new postholder personally through the safeguarding sections of the organisation's code of conduct for staff.

15.3 Upon taking up a new post, the member of staff's line manager will arrange for appropriate training and support – this may include shadowing existing experienced members of staff, attending in-house training or accessing training from external sources. **15.4** All new staff members will undergo safeguarding and child protection training as part of their initial induction. The training should be regularly updated as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Appendix 1

Guidance on- online searches (Recruitment)

1. Introduction

There have been a number of updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education from September 2024. A key update in relation to recruitment is as follows: 'as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help 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.' (KCSIE 2024)

This document will provide guidance on how these online searches should be conducted and provides a template to be provided to the interviewing panel regarding the searches.

2. Recruitment adverts and policies

All recruitment adverts must include the following sentence with effect from 1 September 2022. This can replace the standard wording currently use with regards to the organisation's commitment to safeguarding: OSMIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All appointments are made in accordance with safer recruitment practices and the statutory guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Online checks will be carried out on all shortlisted candidates, and all appointments are subject to an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references and checks regarding suitability to work with children. Relevant policies have been reviewed where needed to reflect this change.

3. Process

Online searches should only be conducted on candidates who are shortlisted for an interview. They should be completed after the shortlisting has taken place, but prior to the interviews taking place, so that any information can be passed to the interview panel to discuss with prospective candidates, if applicable. Therefore, when arranging interviews, you will need to take into account the time required to conduct searches, in particular if a high number of applicants are expected to apply for the post.

An 'online search' is not a 'social media search' – checking someone's social media activity could lead to bias and discrimination. Therefore, an online search must be completed based upon their name and previous names via a Google search. The online search should be carried out by the HR experts LTD. As a minimum, the following searches should be conducted:

- Search on Google with the candidate's name. The proforma at Appendix 1 provides the search parameters to be used when searching Google.
- Although there is no guidance provided in KCSIE in terms of the period of time which searches should cover, recent advice from Browne Jacobson suggested that a period of 5 years should be covered.
- A record of the search conducted should be recorded on the proforma. Any concerning content found during the online search should be saved and attached to the proforma, so that the interviewing panel can discuss this with the candidate at interview.

4. Points of consideration

It is essential that any searches carried out are done sensitively and care must be taken to avoid unconscious bias and any risk of discrimination. Only information which suggests that the candidate is unsuitable to work with children, poses a potential safeguarding risk or risks damaging the reputation of the organisation should be shared with the panel. Any personal information of the candidate, e.g. marital status, sexual orientation, etc., is not relevant to the recruitment process and therefore there is a risk of discrimination if this information is shared. If there are any questions about whether it is appropriate to share any information found as part of an online search, advice must be sought from the Director of HR experts LTD.

5. Record keeping

Records of online searches for shortlisted candidates should be kept with all other recruitment paperwork and destroyed in line with the OSMIS Document Retention Schedule. The check for the successful candidate should be retained on their personnel file with all other recruitment paperwork.

Signed by:

A M Keenan
Manager
Date: 11.09.24

C Wilson
Director/ Deputy Manager
Date: 11.09.24