

Blackfen School for Girls



Safer Recruitment Policy

Headteacher: Ms C Senior

Chair of Governors: Mr S Fitz-Gerald

	Date	Name	Signature
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Lead Person	Headteacher	Carrie Senior	
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Approved by	Chair of Governors	Stuart Fitz-Gerald	

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Rationale

Children have the right to be protected from harm. Our safer recruitment policy and procedures ensures that this happens.

Statement of intent

Blackfen school is committed to safer recruitment practices and procedures.

These practices help make sure our staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people. It is a vital part of creating a safe and positive environment and making a commitment to keep children safe from harm.

Our policies and practice ensure that robust procedures are in place to deter and prevent those who are unsuitable to work with children from doing so, by deterring and preventing them from applying for roles or securing employment or a volunteering opportunity at Blackfen. The recruitment process, from the advertisement of a role, to subsequent employment, meets the requirements as set out in KCSiE 2024 on Safer Recruitment.

Adverts and application forms for roles at Blackfen School for Girls

Any adverts for roles at Blackfen School define the role through a job description, a person specification and indicate the extent to which the role will involve contact with children. Adverts make clear whether the role is considered 'regulated activity.' Adverts include the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, are clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken, and make clear if the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

The application form includes a statement that it is an offence to apply for a role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

The application form for posts requires all applicants to provide;

- Personal details, including current and former names, address and NI number
- Details of employment (past/current) and reason for leaving
- Full employment history including reasons for any gaps in employment
- Qualifications, the awarding body and the date of the awards
- A written statement of the personal qualities and experience of the candidate.

Blackfen School for Girls does not accept CVs in lieu of written applications under any circumstances.

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Shortlisting

At least two members of staff are involved in the shortlisting process for any advertised roles, and at least one of these members of staff will be Safer Recruitment trained.

Pre-interview information

We will carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that we will carry out these checks as part of our due diligence process.

All applications for positions will be checked by the HR Officer who will highlight any concerns or gaps. These will be highlighted for discussion at interview.

References (2) will be sought for all applicants. No candidate can be employed without two satisfactory references being received.

We also obtain a completed Self-Disclosure Form: Regulated Activity from all candidates.

Shortlisted candidates must also inform the school if they are known to police or children's local authority social care, if they have been disqualified from providing childcare, and any relevant overseas information.

All shortlisted applicants who attend interview will sign a declaration stating that the information they have provided is true and will sign a hard copy of this declaration if they have only signed electronically.

Seeking references and checking employment history

We will obtain references before interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references, we will:

- Not accept open references, nor accept references from personal email accounts.
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees.
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations.
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed.
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate.
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed.

Interview and selection

The Headteacher (or someone deputising who is safer recruitment trained) will check through the application and will highlight any concerns to seek clarification about.

All interviews are conducted by at least two members of staff. At least one member of staff on the interview panel must be trained in safer recruitment. A range of selection techniques are used and structured questions are asked at interview. All staff interviewing candidates must complete the interview response form and provide any additional written notes to HR.

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When interviewing candidates, we will:

Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this.

Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children. These could include: any implication that adults and children are equal; lack of recognition or understanding of the vulnerability of children; inappropriate idealisation of children; inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries; indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours.

All interviewers will record all information considered and decisions made.

Pre appointment vetting checks

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity.
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the physical certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. Copies of certificates are not retained for more than six months and only if there is a valid reason for the retention of this copy.
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards.
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate. For teachers, this will include using the Teacher Regulation Agency's Employer Access Service to verify the award of QTS and the completion of the required probation or induction period.
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher.
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
 - For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants.
 - For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach.
- Check that candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state.

* Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant headteachers.

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

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We will seek 2 references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview (unless the candidate states that they do not want this to happen). We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not.

Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is. We will do this if instructed e.g., by LADO or other external agency.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- we believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct (see DfE guidance); or
- the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e., they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- the individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left.

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made. This must include written confirmation that the Enhanced DBS Certificate has been obtained. Blackfen School will request photographic ID on arrival, in addition to this assurance.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity.
- an enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children.

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We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded or on a PGCE placement, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

Volunteers

We will:

- never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity.
- obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity.
- carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment.

Governors

All governors (this includes trustees, local governors and members] will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

The chair of the Governing body will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- a section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008);
- identity;
- right to work in the UK; and
- other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK.

Staff working in alternative provision settings

Where we place a student with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

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Adults who supervise students on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a student under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Procedures

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks.

Responsibilities

Named governor – for carrying out a check on the SCR every term.

External adviser – for working with the HR Officer and the Governor to carry out checks at end of every term.

Headteacher – for ensuring that all interview panels have at least one person who is safer recruitment trained.

HR Officer – ensuring that there is a register of staff and governors who are trained in safer recruitment including information about when the training was completed and who the training provider was.

HR Officer – ensuring that all staff and governors who are trained in safer recruitment update their training at least once every three years.

HR Officer – for carrying out the relevant checks and for keeping the SCR up to date.

Links with other policies and legislation

Safeguarding and Child Protection policy (2024)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1 2024)