



Safer Recruitment Policy

Approved Spring 2026

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Introduction

This policy reflects the DfE guidance, in particular KCSIE and Working Together documents. The policy should be read in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy & Procedure.

Rationale

The Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all its staff, including those employed by contractors, and volunteers to share this commitment.

The organisation will safeguard and promote the welfare of all its children, in compliance with the latest DfE Guidance “Keeping children safe in education” and “Working Together” documents

1. Advertising

When any form of advertising is used to recruit staff or volunteers, the following information will be reflected:

- aims of the organisation and where appropriate, the particular programme involved
- a detailed job role description including the qualities, qualifications and standards required in the successful candidate, and details of the checking procedures to be carried out
- that the organisation is an equal opportunities employer, operating within child safeguarding standards
- All advertisements will include the following statement: “The foundation is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post holders are subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.”

2. Pre-Application Information

Pre-application information available to interested or potential applicants will include:

- a job or role description, including roles and responsibilities
- a person specification which clearly states qualifications and experience required
- an application form
- a copy of the organisations Safeguarding Policy
- a copy of the organisations Safer Recruitment Policy (this document)

3. Application Forms

- All applicants, (whether paid or voluntary, full time or part time positions) will need to complete an application form, including a full work history. Individuals providing incomplete applications or CVs will not be considered.

4. References

Contact details of two written references (not relatives) are required, one of which should be the most recent employer. References will be requested via email, prior to interview.

References will be sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate will never be accepted.

Upon receipt of a written reference, the Referee will be contacted by telephone to verify the reference and to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

Referees will always be asked specific questions about:

- The candidate's suitability for working with children, young people or adults at risk.
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- The candidate's suitability for this post.

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references prior to the provisional start date. Please note that should the applicant be unable to provide references within the UK, overseas references and where appropriate, a DBS and / or barring check will be undertaken.

Any offer of employment will be conditional upon receipt of two acceptable references. Aspire reserves the right to withdraw an offer of employment if two references are not provided/available or if a reference indicates the candidate is not suitable for the role they have applied for.

In the case of applicants leaving full-time education or not having worked since doing so, the Head of School, College, University etc. should be named as one of the referees.

Verified references will be sent, by HR, to the relevant SMT member for review, prior to any final offer of employment.

5. Disclosures

All successful candidates will be required to complete an enhanced level DBS check. All advertised roles make clear that the candidate may be subject to a DBS check. The applicant has a responsibility to disclose any previous convictions, in line with the relevant legislation. See our policy for Recruiting Persons with a Criminal Record for more information.

6. Shortlisting

A Panel (including at least one member of the Senior Management Team (SMT)) will short list candidates against the person specification for the post. This will be carried out by a minimum of two fully trained staff members and at least one of these will have completed Safer Recruitment training. In the instance of recruitment to SMT posts, shortlisting will be conducted by a panel of Directors.

Aspire will carry out online searches of all shortlisted candidates, to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the Foundation might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Employees of the Foundation shall inform the relevant Strategic Lead (Organisation, Children & Family Centres or Early Years) or, in the case of the Strategic Leads (Organisation, Children & Family Centres or Early Years)/, the Chair of Directors, of any relationship known to them to exist between themselves and a candidate for an appointment/engagement in which they are directly involved. If a candidate deliberately omits to disclose a relationship they will be disqualified. If the omission is discovered after appointment or engagement, they shall be liable to dismissal.

All short-listed candidates will be asked to complete a criminal record self-disclosure form

7. Interview process

Interviews will be carried out by a minimum of two fully trained staff members (one of which will be a member of the SMT) and will always be conducted face-to-face. At least one member of the interview panel will be Safer Recruitment trained.

Selection methods will be outlined before the interview and candidates will be asked if they need any special arrangements for these.

All candidates will be asked the same questions. Questions will relate to the person specification to explore experience and suitability for the role. The interview will be used to:

- Explore the candidate's suitability to work with young people.
- Explore their attitude and their motivations for applying for the role.
- Explore any gaps in work history.
- Check the candidate's identity.

For some roles candidates will be asked to perform a task or give a presentation relevant to the role. Details of these will be provided in advance.

8. Appointment

It is contrary to the Foundation's HR policies for an employee to make an appointment/engagement which is based on anything other than the ability of the individual to undertake the duties of the post. Employees must not be involved in an appointment/engagement where they are related to an applicant or have any personal or business relationship outside work with them.

Employees must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative, partner or close personal friend.

The successful applicant will be issued with a conditional offer letter, and all new starter paperwork. It will specify full details and requirements of the position, salary and any probation period (if appropriate). The applicant will be informed that the appointment is subject to a satisfactory DBS certificate and two references. Having a criminal record does not automatically prevent someone from working with or for the organisation.

HR will contact the successful candidate to gather personal details in order to carry out a DBS check online. All DBS checks will be renewed every 3 years and will cover working with Children and Young people.

New members of staff will be asked to subscribe to the DBS update service, to allow annual checking of DBS certificates. The Foundation will cover any associated costs.

Once all recruitment checks are in place, candidates will be issued with an employment contract, to sign and return.

9. Training

Once recruited, all new staff and volunteers will receive training and written guidelines to ensure they remain fully aware of relevant safeguarding procedures and will receive thorough training for their role. Safeguarding training will be renewed every 2 years.

10. Induction and Probation period

All staff and volunteers will undergo a formal induction, which will cover the organisation's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Training needs will be established as part of their induction and refreshed on an ongoing basis.

All new staff will be subject to a probation period of six months (which may, in certain circumstances, be extended). The probation period is a trial period, to enable the assessment of an employee's suitability for the role for which they have been recruited.