



West Hill School

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Safer Recruitment Policy

Item	Author/Owner	Date Written	Approved by	Date Approved
1	L Harrison S Heath	November 2023	Full Board of Trustees	January 2024
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Key Changes

Date	Description of change	Omissions	Highlighted changes	Reason for change/ amendment	Page and paragraph reference
June 2023	No Changes				
November 2023	Amended Criminal Convictions Paragraph				Page 12
November 2023	or Recruitment Pack added to paragraph (Appointing to a vacancy)				Page 3
November 2023	or Recruitment Pack added to sentence				Page 4
November 2024	All short-listed candidates will be subject to online searches as part of pre recruitment checks. The purpose of this is to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we may want to explore with the application at interview.			New safeguarding procedure that now takes place.	Page 12
November 2025	The recruitment steps outlined below are based on part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 .			Added from The Key Model Policy	3
November 2025	When advertising roles, we will make clear:			Added from The Key Model Policy	5
November 2025	Our application forms will:			Added from The Key Model Policy	6
November 2025	Self-Declaration – Criminal Record			Added from The Key Model Policy but in practice already	7
November 2025	Policy reordered to place all pre-employment procedures and checks together.				



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Purpose

The recruitment steps outlined below are based on part 3 of [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) 2025](#).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that West Hill School follows a robust, rigorous and fair process when recruiting staff, which minimises the risk of appointing people who may pose a risk or harm children. To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training.

The policy applies to all staff who work in West Hill School, including staff, trustees, volunteers and other engaged by the school work with pupils.

Vacancies

A vacancy is an opportunity for West Hill School to identify the needs of the required service and to redefine a post to ensure that these needs can be met more efficiently and effectively. When filling a vacancy, the Headteacher will take account of current school needs, staffing structure and budget available before recruiting to fill a gap left by a departing staff member.

Managers must also give reasonable consideration to making changes to physical conditions, supervision, training or job descriptions which could create better opportunities for people such as those with disabilities, maternity returners, young people, and people with other special needs.

All teaching and support posts are eligible for consideration for job share subject to agreement by the trustee body.

Appointing to a Vacancy

A job description and person specification or recruitment pack will be provided in any recruitment and selection process. These are key documents and must therefore be used as an integral part of the recruitment process.

The job description must be clear and reasonably concise and should be a fair representation of the post. West Hill School would normally match the salary point of any teacher on joining the school although this is discretionary. Any exception to this will be clearly explained at the advertising stage.

The person specification describes the standards, attributes and requirements accurately and identifies between the necessary (essential) requirements and those which are desirable for the required role.

The job description and person specification will both include the safeguarding requirements of the role.



Selection Panel

The selection panel has a responsibility to appoint the person who best matches the person specification.

It must also ensure that all relevant employment legislation and school policies are followed and that the selection process is managed in an equitable manner. Each panel will have a Chair acting as an 'Appointing Officer' who is normally the person responsible for the management of the process as a whole.

Any selection panel will normally have three selectors for all appointments below Senior Leadership level, and will be as diverse as possible. The minimum requirement is two selectors. All panels must have at least one member who has had recent accredited Safer Recruitment training.

Where possible, all members of the selection panel are involved in the whole process from the outset of agreeing the job description, person specification or recruitment pack and the method of recruitment, to the short-listing and finally the interviewing and selection. Where this is impractical at least one member of the panel will have had involvement at every stage to ensure that no essential safeguarding information is missed. All members of the panel will be familiar with the job description and person specification.

Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel, it will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

Other Appointments

Temporary Staff: Selectors must apply the same high standards of selection to temporary appointments. There must be an assessment made against the person specification criteria and a proper selection process should take place.

Selectors must be sure that any existing temporary member of staff is the best person available to fill the job and should take into account legitimate aspirations of other employees and those needing to be redeployed.

Other Appointments

Fixed Term/Temporary Appointments Including Secondments/Acting Up:

The Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favorable Treatment) regulations contains certain provisions in relation to temporary employment of individuals. A 'fixed term contract' means a contract of employment that comes to an end:

- Contracts that last for a specified period of time, or
- Contracts that will end when a specified task has been completed, or
- Contracts that will end when a specified event does or does not happen.



Under the regulations, an employer must not treat fixed-term employees less favourably than permanent employees doing the same, or largely the same, job unless there is good reason to do so.

Fixed-term employees have the right to:

- the same pay and conditions
- the same or equivalent benefits package
- access to an occupational pension scheme
- be informed about permanent employment opportunities in the organization
- protection against redundancy or dismissal because they are fixed-term.

Other Recruitment Sources

Casual and agency staff: appointments of casual and agency staff will include some form of assessment in order to determine suitability for the post. The equality aspects of any such arrangements must be very carefully monitored. The school will ensure that any third party (e.g. agency and contractors) have robust safer recruitment practices in place.

Advertising and Attracting Candidates:

The aim of our recruitment advertising is:

1. To promote West Hill School as an interesting and attractive place to work.
2. To present a positive public image.
3. To attract the right person for the post.

All vacancies that are to be appointed external to the school will be placed on the school website and advertised externally. All internal vacancies will be advertised through the internal school systems.

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

1. Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
2. That safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
3. The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children.
4. Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'filtered', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account.

Recruitment Information for Candidates

This information should aim to encourage suitable candidates to apply for the position and should help others to decide for themselves whether completing and returning an application is appropriate (i.e., to self-select). As a minimum, this information will include:

1. A copy of the advertisement
2. Recruitment pack or job description/person specification
3. Job information
4. Equal opportunities material
5. Safeguarding Policy.



Candidates have the right to bring to the attention of the panel any concerns that they may have in relation to the recruitment and selection procedures - especially if they feel that discrimination has occurred or may have occurred during the process. Within our formal interview we ask candidates about the fairness of the process thus far. Selectors are also glad of any positive feedback.

Application Forms

An application form will always be used to ensure that a common set of core data is obtained from all candidates. CVs will not be accepted for safeguarding reasons. All forms, whether 'complete' or 'incomplete', must be considered by the selectors. Candidates with any form of disability or SEN are allowed to submit applications in other formats than the standard application form.

Our application forms will:

1. Include a statement saying that it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)
2. Include a copy or, or link to, our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Closing Dates

Closing dates and response arrangements will be clearly indicated:

- On the advertisement
- In any covering letter.

West Hill School will always ensure that applicants are aware and understand what will happen after their application form is received.

Short-Listing

All members of the selection panel should be equally involved and should contribute to the short-listing process - otherwise selectors have advisory status.

Assessment

When drawing up a short-list, selectors will assess applicants solely against the person specification criteria. Selectors should only ever shortlist candidates who fully meet the essential person specification requirements and, from the application form at least, appear to be appointable.

Selectors will draw up their shortlist systematically, measuring candidates' experience and qualities methodically against the person specification. All candidates' experience, qualities, qualifications etc must be carefully assessed consistently against the person specification and copies of the selectors' assessment will be placed on file.

References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions and provide assurances in terms of safeguarding. In-line with Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance, references will be sought on all short-listed



candidates, including internal ones, before interview, in order that any issues of concern can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.

Where the candidate has previously worked with children, references should be sought in relation to this role. Where the candidate is not currently working with children, a reference should be sought from the applicant's current (or most recent if not currently working) employer.

References will be sought directly in writing from the named referee prior to the interview. The school will check this is from a verified source and confirmed by the Headteacher of the school providing the reference. The school does not accept references or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. 'To Whom It May Concern'.

If an employer says it is not their policy to provide references, the applicant will be asked to nominate another referee.

Offers of employment will not be made until satisfactory references have been received.

Online Searches – Shortlisted Candidates

All short-listed candidates will be subject to online searches as part of pre recruitment checks. The purpose of this is to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we may want to explore with the application at interview.

Self-Declaration – Criminal Record

All short-listed candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. All shortlisted candidates will be signposted to a 'filtering' tool to help them determine what, if anything should be disclosed.

Criminal Convictions

If the candidate has revealed information about a criminal background the panel must decide whether, in relation to the post in question, the nature of their background is eligible to be considered and sufficiently serious enough to make them unsuitable to work with children.

It is important to note that the possession of a criminal background does not automatically debar an applicant from employment.

All information in relation to previous convictions given by applicants must be treated in the strictest confidence. However, the applicant has a right to be informed of the contents of a police report.

Candidates should be aware that failure to disclose eligible previous offences or pending legal action for posts which are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act could lead to the offer of employment being withdrawn or dismissal if the successful candidate has already commenced employment in post.



Disabled Applicants

Candidates indicating that they have a disability on the application form, providing that they meet the essential criteria on the person specification, will be included on a shortlist.

Rejecting Candidates

The advert and applicant information outlines a timeline by which all applications are to be received. Applicants should assume they have not been shortlisted after this time.

Objectives of the Selection Process

The final selection is not just a test of the candidates. Interviewers must approach the selection process fairly and objectively. An interviewer should have the ability to:

- Listen, probe, assess and, above all, to be objective and fair
- Deal with all the candidates consistently
- Deal only with the candidate's ability to carry out the job
- Determine each candidate's suitability for the job as measured against the person specification
- Maintain the image of the school as a good employer
- Select the right person for the job and thus contribute to the effective delivery of services to the school and community.

Selection Methods

The role and function of the Chair of the selection process is crucial to its effective management.

The interview is most commonly used as the method of assessing candidates for appointments, but there may be some aspects of the job requirements which cannot be tested in interview and for which different forms of assessment are necessary, e.g. presentations, practical activities, specific skills exercises.

West Hill School will inform candidates of an interview opportunity and provide an outline of the process that they will be expected to undertake in advance. Candidates are advised in any invitation to interview documentation to contact the school with details of any adjustments they may require to enable them to attend the interview or the selection process.

Each individual will be assessed according to their capability to carry out the particular role.

Questions will focus on the specific job and requirements set out in the person specification. Question(s) relating to safeguarding and child protection appropriate to the post level and type will be included in every interview.

Decision Making

Relevant and objective selection criteria will be used, and information accurately recorded from which it should be clear how the final decision was reached.



The final decision will be based on the job description and person specification, using agreed criteria and defining the standards required to perform the job. Each candidate will be measured against these benchmark requirements.

Selectors will ensure that they have sound and accountable reasons as to why all candidates were not selected at any stage and must consider all the evidence they have collected. The selection panel should normally unanimously agree with their final selection and formally record this.

All selection assessment records should be handed to the Chair of the panel.

Confidentiality

Information obtained within the whole selection process will be treated as confidential. Comments relating to specific candidates' performance will not be revealed outside the process (except, of course, personal feedback to individual candidates).

Enhanced DBS Checks (inc Barred List check if in Regulated Activity)

Enhanced Update Service checks or Enhanced DBS disclosures are required for staff and volunteers who are employed by the school. A barred list check should be completed in addition for those who undertake 'regulated activity'. Regulated Activity' may depend in many cases on whether it is supervised or not. 'Regular' means carried out by the same person frequently (once a week or more often), or on 4 or more days in a 30-day period. Regulated Activity for work with children and young people is:

- Unsupervised activities: teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children, or providing advice / guidance on well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children
- Work for a limited range of establishments 'specified places', with opportunity for contact, for example schools, children's homes, childcare premises (but not work by supervised volunteers)
- Relevant personal care, for example washing or dressing; or health care by or supervised by a professional, even if done once.

DBS applications will be completed by all successful applicants who require a DBS check. Where the successful applicant is registered appropriately with the Update Service, consent to check the status will be obtained before proceeding.

West Hill School will recheck the DBS and Barred List status of successful internal applicants who secure a new role now involving regulated activity where this has not previously been the case.

Newly appointed staff that have lived outside the United Kingdom must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools. This includes a DBS Disclosure. If the school recruits an individual from overseas, or an individual who has lived abroad in recent years prior to appointment, and needs to check their overseas criminal record, a DBS check may not provide a complete picture of the criminal record. The applicant must contact the relevant Embassy to obtain a disclosure.



Volunteers – DBS requirements

A similar recruitment process will be used for volunteers, as for employees, including pre-employment checks. Volunteers may be subject to an enhanced DBS check. Volunteers in school may not automatically be subject to Barred List Check checks. A DBS check or Update Service check that includes a Barred List check can only be requested if the volunteer will have regular unsupervised access to children (see below for a definition).

When determining whether to apply for a DBS check including a Barred List check or check for a volunteer, the Headteacher should decide whether the individual will regularly be undertaking regulated activity on an unsupervised basis:

- ‘Supervision’ must be regular i.e. ongoing and day-to-day, which is reasonable in all circumstances for the purpose of protecting the children concerned and carried out by an who is engaging in regulated activity relating to children and has a DBS disclosure with barred list check.
- The definition of ‘regulated activity’ is ‘teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice/guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children’.
- The definition of ‘regular’ activity is where a regulated activity is undertaken by the same individual as follows either once a week or more; on four or more days in a 30-day period; at least once, overnight and with the opportunity for face-to-face contact with children.

Supply Teachers

A DBS check is required for all supply teachers who are engaged directly by the school and those working via an agency.

Schools who engage the services of supply teachers directly are responsible for undertaking all the required pre-employment checks including the DBS check. Where a supply teacher does no supply work for three months or more, a new DBS check should be completed.

Before taking on a member of supply staff provided by a supply agency, the school must obtain written confirmation from the agency that all necessary pre-employment checks have been carried out and are satisfactory. In relation to DBS Disclosures, the written notification from the agency must confirm that a relevant DBS check has been requested, whether or not the disclosure has been received and if received whether the disclosure was clear or not. In an instance where a disclosure is not clear, details should be obtained from the agency and the individual as to the reasons for any convictions, reprimands or warnings. The candidate should be requested to provide their DBS certificate and explain any relevant details, where a candidate refuses to do this, they should not be used. If West Hill School engage the individual on a permanent basis, a repeat check must be carried out by the school. The individual must not undertake any unsupervised work until a satisfactory DBS disclosure has been received.



Contractors/ Agencies

West Hill School will ensure that contractors or agencies providing temporary staff and all those providing services to the school have clear vetting procedures and that evidence is provided that appropriate checks have been undertaken and are satisfactory in advance of any contractor/agency worker commencing work. Such procedures should include overseas checks for each country that a worker has lived in. Where possible these procedures should be specifically written into a service level agreement or contract by the school.

School Trustees

All trustees, in any type of school-maintained, independent, academy or free school, must have an Enhanced DBS certificate. Trustees appointed after 1st April 2016 must apply for an Enhanced DBS check within 21 days.

Commencement of Employment Prior to DBS Check

Electronic completion of DBS checks and the DBS update service mean it is very unlikely that a school will need an employee to start work before it has received the outcome of the check. In rare cases where a DBS check is required and an application has been submitted but is delayed or outstanding, the individual may be allowed to work in school, subject to the Headteachers's discretion and the following requirements:

- The Headteacher has conducted a risk assessment and does not have any concerns regarding a person's background
- The risk assessment includes reviewing the individual's employment history and reasons for any broken work history or career changes and checking all references have been received, are satisfactory and have been checked against the work history records. Advice on carrying out a risk assessment can be sought from HR
- All other pre-employment checks have been completed
- The individual is fully supervised until DBS clearance has been received.

If the Headteacher has any doubts regarding a person's background, such as broken service, then the risk must be addressed. For example, arrangements may be made for the member of staff to undertake alternative work or to refrain from starting work.

Supervision requires the Headteacher to ensure that individuals are not allocated duties that put them in an unsupervised situation with pupils, that they are accompanied when working by a member of staff with DBS clearance, that their whereabouts are known to a Senior Leader when they are not working (e.g. during break times), and that the individual fully understands their personal responsibility not to put themselves in a situation where they are alone with pupils and what to do if this situation arises.

A written record should be made and retained when a Headteacher decides it is appropriate to allow an individual to work where a DBS check has been requested but remains outstanding (following a risk assessment by the Headteacher).



Positive Disclosures

A positive disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service will indicate that the employee's Disclosure and Barring Check is not clear. The DBS will provide the candidate with details of the convictions, reprimands and warnings; however, the school will not be provided with this information. The candidate will be asked to share details of the reasons as to why their disclosure is not clear and to provide their Disclosure Certificate. If the employee is not prepared to explain details of their convictions, reprimands and/or warnings and are not prepared to provide a copy of their disclosure then the likely outcome is that the school will not employ the candidate.

Before a decision is reached on whether to offer or confirm employment to an individual, the individual will be offered the opportunity to discuss the contents of the disclosure with the Headteacher. A balanced decision to appoint will be based on:

- whether they are barred from appointment
- whether the conviction is relevant to the position
- the circumstances surrounding the offence, and any explanations provided by the applicant, including any mitigating circumstances –e.g. peer pressure, financial circumstances, lack of judgement
- the severity of the offence
- the length of time since the offence occurred
- whether there is a pattern to the offending behaviour, or whether it was a one-off
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed e.g. location, friends, partner, education
- the candidate's attitude to the conviction, does the individual regret the matter(s).

Further discussion will take place regarding:

- whether the applicant disclosed the conviction(s)/cautions, warnings or reprimands at application or at interview stage
- what level of supervision the post-holder will receive
- whether the post involves responsibility for finance or items of value
- whether the nature of the role allows the applicant to potentially re-offend.

The Headteacher will make the overall decision about whether or not to employ the person. Disclosures which raise child protection issues must be discussed with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where a decision to appoint is made, the information will be recorded and be stored on the person's file.

If an applicant has made a false declaration on the application form, or anywhere else, about convictions and cautions (or lack of them), this may render the offer of a contract of employment void.

It is an offence for a person who is on the barred list to apply for a role working with children. It is an offence for an employer (the school) to employ a person who is on the barred list.



Medical

Where medical screening takes place, all clinical information is confidential and will not be released to management unless there is a specific need, and the consent of the applicant has been obtained. Systems set up for screening, in line with the Equality Act 2010, will protect confidentiality at all times.

Notification of Results of Selection Process

Shortlisted candidates will be informed as quickly as possible about the outcome of the selection process and options concerning salary and terms for the successful candidates(s) confirmed.

Please note that differential terms must be justifiable and any negotiations within normal parameters. The school should ensure where different terms and conditions (e.g. salary point) are justified and documented where more than one candidate is appointed.

Feedback to Candidates

All shortlisted candidates will be informed of the outcome of their interview and feedback given to any candidates requesting it with honest, constructive and thorough feedback in relation to their application.

To ensure consistency, one member of the interview panel will be designated to give such feedback or, alternatively, the interview panel must reconvene to meet the candidate(s) concerned.

Review and Monitoring

At the end of each selection process, those responsible should review the decisions made and the procedures used to ensure that they are confident that the approach adopted has reflected the school's commitment to equal rights and to positive action. Selectors should be able to justify every decision taken and the process which has been adopted to arrive at their selection.

A note of the reason for rejection for each unsuccessful candidate must be made. The reasons should relate to a specific area or areas of the person specification.

The recruitment 'master file' must be kept for at least 6 months and should contain key documentation which should include all notes from interviewers.

Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks

We will record information on the checks carried out for the successful candidate in our Single Central Record. 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. A school is expected to have a record of:

- All staff employed to work at the school
- Staff employed as supply whether employed directly or through an agency



- Other staff who work in regular contact with children such as volunteers or specialist instructors (including school employees)
- School Trustees/Trustees.

The record should show whether or not the following checks have taken place:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job e.g. those posts where a person must have QTS or NPQH
- Additionally, for those applying for teaching posts, registration with the Teaching Agency where appropriate
- EEA checks for teachers who qualified outside of the UK
- Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom
- Checks on information held under the Children's Barred List
- DBS Enhanced Check and number
- Further overseas records checks, where appropriate
- Qualified Teacher, unqualified teacher, HLTA prohibition checks
- S128 Prohibition checks for management/proprietors/trustees.

The record must show the date on which each check was completed, or the relevant certificate obtained. It should also show who carried out the check.

Although it is not mandatory to record any checks on the Single Central Record for the purpose of 'disqualification' under the Childcare Act, schools must keep a record of those staff who are employed to work in, or manage relevant childcare provision; they should record the date on which the information about disqualification was provided.

Probationary Periods

Applicants will be informed that the post is subject to a probationary period (where relevant). See the school's policy on probationary periods.

Induction

A systematic induction programme will be prepared to help the new employee adjust to their new social and working environment and to become effective in their role as soon as possible.



Appendix I - Policy Statement on Appointment of Staff

The school is committed to:

- Attracting and recruiting individuals who are best suited to meet the standards for the job. Decisions on the suitability of applications will be made without regard to gender, race, disability, religion, or similar belief. Age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital status or membership or non-membership of a trade union.
- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment.

Category of Staff	Examples	Suggested number on the interview and short-listing Panel	Personnel who could be involved	Comments
Support Staff	Cleaners Admin and Clerical Technicians Learning Support Assistants Site Maintenance Sports Hall staff Behaviour Manager Learning Support Manager	Minimum of 3	Head and/or Business Manager, relevant SLT and appropriate line manager.	Same personnel should be involved in both parts of the appointment process
Teaching Staff	Main Scale Teacher	Minimum of 3	Relevant SLT and appropriate line manager.	Same personnel should be involved in both parts of the appointment process
Teaching staff with TLR2 level of responsibility	Department Leadership Head of Year Departmental KS Co-ordinator	Minimum of 3	Relevant SLT and appropriate line manager.	Same personnel should be involved in both parts of the appointment process
Teaching staff with TLR1 level of responsibility	Curriculum Leader: Core	Minimum of 3	Relevant SLT and appropriate line manager.	Same personnel should be involved in both parts of the appointment process



Assistant Head	Assistant Head	Minimum of 3	Head or Deputy Head, relevant SLT, appropriate line manager and a Trustee.	Same personnel should be involved in both parts of the appointment process
Deputy Head	Deputy Head	Minimum of 3	Head or Deputy Head, relevant SLT and Chair of Trustees.	Same personnel should be involved in both parts of the appointment process Trustees involved should reflect the composition of the Trustee Body e.g. Parent and Academy.
Head	Head	Minimum of 3	Chair of Trustees, wider Trustees, relevant SLT and school leaders.	Same personnel should be involved in both parts of the appointment process Trustees involved should reflect the composition of the Trustee Body e.g. Parent and Academy.

Interview panels should always be made up of an odd number of people in order to ensure the best possibility of an appointment being made. In the event of a tie, because a Trustee has abstained for good reason, the panel should seriously consider re-advertising the post.