

## **St Martin's School Safer Recruitment Policy**

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in education. St Martin's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

We recognise the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce, which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities. The school is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the school is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. The school will uphold its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles set down in the school's Equality Policy.

All posts within school are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

The school is committed to ensuring people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position or from volunteering within the school.

The school will:

- ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have received safer recruitment training.
  - ensure that every appointment panel to include one member who has received safer recruitment training
  - implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role.
  - keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DFE requirements
  - ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure. The school will monitor the compliance with these measures.
  - require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the school to notify the school, in writing of the offence and the penalty
- The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken:
- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one of which will be from the former or most recent employer

- A prohibition check
- A satisfactory DBS clearance
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of professional registration as required by law for teachers
- Verification of successful completion of induction period
- A completed Disqualification Declaration form as updated in September 2022 in the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
- A personal social media check

#### Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the governing body to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DFE guidance and legal requirements
- Monitor the school's compliance with them

It is the responsibility of the Proprietor, Head Teacher and other Senior Leaders involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure

It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers to comply with this document. It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safer recruitment pre-employment checks. The Directors have delegated responsibility to the Proprietor and Head Teacher to take the lead in appointments outside of the leadership group at initial interview stage. A representative of Harwil Education Ltd will be present at final interviews and make the final decision after feedback and advice from the Head Teacher.

## **The Procedure**

### **Advertising**

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, normally this will entail an external advertisement. Qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate. Volunteers in school are also welcome to apply to internally advertised posts.

Absences due to short and long term sickness is usually covered 'in-house' in the first instance until it is known how long the member of staff is likely to be absent. Temporary positions will then be advertised for long term absence positions.

### **Applications**

The form – The school uses a standard application form. CVs are accepted in addition to the application form but will not be accepted on its own.

The school requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police and other professional regulatory bodies (e.g. General Teaching Council for England).

## **References**

References for shortlisted candidates will be applied for before interview stage. This will ensure that any detail requiring more information or clarification can be discussed at interview.

References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable.

The school will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable. Reference requests will specifically ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.

Referees will also be asked to confirm details of:

- The applicant's current post, salary and attendance record
- Performance history and conduct
- Any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current
- Any disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired and the outcome of those details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns.
- Provide details and certificates clarifying qualifications

References will be compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be discussed with the applicant at interview.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and which no further issues have been raised, are not likely to cause concern. More serious or recent concerns or issues are more likely to cause concern. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

## **Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants**

The school's policy is to require shortlisted applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all criminal convictions whether "spent" or "unspent" and include any cautions and pending prosecution. Such declarations will be made on an appropriate form and should be submitted in a sealed envelope, marked strictly private and confidential to Head Teacher, prior to the interview. The Head Teacher will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at

interview. The disclosure of convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

## **Interviews**

The selection process will always include the following:

- Professional interview,
- Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status.
- Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents. Similar information is also required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check on the preferred candidate.
- Short-listed candidates will also be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation. The school will verify that candidates have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the school will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where candidates have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check by ENIC will also be required.
- Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the Head Teacher.

Commencement of Employment prior to DBS check being received

In unusual circumstances, it is permitted to commence employment prior to receiving a cleared DBS check. However, a prohibition check and risk assessment must be completed. An adult will not be left alone with a child under these circumstances.

### **Employment Offer**

After checks detailed above must all be completed BEFORE a person's appointment is confirmed. In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued. The contract will be issued as soon as possible but in all circumstances within 8 weeks of employment commencing.

### **Record Retention / Data Protection**

The school will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6 month period, after which time the notes will be destroyed. The 6 month retention period will allow the school to deal with any data access requests or recruitment complaints.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a subject access request in writing to the Head Teacher within 6 months of the interview date.

## **Personal file records**

For the successful candidate, the school will retain the following information which will make up part of their personal file:

Application form  
References  
Disclosure of convictions form  
Proof of identification  
Proof of academic qualifications  
Evidence of medical needs (if any)  
Evidence of the DBS clearance  
Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks

In line with DFE requirements, the school will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The central list will record all staff who are employed at the school, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, governors who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g. specialist sports coach or artist.

The central record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

Identity checks including photographic  
Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job  
Additionally for those applying for teaching posts, registration check with the GTC where appropriate  
Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom  
Commencement date of employment  
Prohibition checks  
DBS Enhanced Disclosure  
Further overseas records where appropriate  
Fit to work status and date  
References  
It shall also indicate who undertook the check and the date on which the check was completed or the relevant certificate obtained.  
National Insurance Numbers  
CPD / courses

## **Agency supply staff**

In order to record supply staff provided through an agency on the record, the school will require written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed the checks described above. The school does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure.

However, identity checks must be carried out by the school to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them.

## **Probation periods**

All members of staff are subject to a probationary period of one Year.

School staff will be given a copy of the DFE guidance on Safe Working Practice and asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the document and will follow the guidelines required to maintain professional boundaries at all times. The school has a specific safeguarding related whistle blowing policy which has been disseminated to all staff and volunteers and is available on the staff portal of the website.

The school adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously. The school will follow DFE and Barnet Safeguarding Children Board allegations procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

## **Induction**

All newly appointed staff will, either prior to or at the point of taking up the post, undergo a program of induction appropriate for their post. The induction will specifically address issues concerning the safeguarding of children and young people and Health and Safety as well as matters directly related to the operation of the post.

## **Long serving staff**

We acknowledge the benefit to the school of staff who have served with us for a number of years. We are also mindful of the benefit to us of staff who have come to us after long periods of childcare. At the same time, we recognise that it can be hard to close references on these staff. In line with advice from a number of professional organizations, including the local child safety board, NSPCC and Andrew Hall we will seek references from professionals who know these people such as Doctors, Solicitors and religious leaders. In order to further promote the safety of our children we must make continuous checks on our staff. Every 5 years, every member of staff will be subjected to:

A prohibition check

DBS check

An internet / social media search

A risk assessment

If they enter a new co-habiting relationship, we will ask them to complete the disbarment through association declaration.

We are in the process of ensuring all staff and Governors are registered with the rolling DBS program.

We will also record on their file, any and all incidents which are brought to our attention whether they are founded or not because we acknowledge that professionals who were prosecuted for having let children down, often displayed a pattern of minor behavior leading up to the substantive charge and that careful recording may have avoided a child protection incident. All staff files will be locked and marked 'Strictly Confidential'. They will only be accessed by Sam Mbah - Head Teacher, Justine Shannon – Operations Manager and Mrs Joanna Wilson - Director of Harwil Education Ltd and Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Signed Joanna Wilson – November 2023

To be reviewed: November 2024 (and ongoing)