

Queen's College, London
Queen's College Preparatory School
(including Early Years Foundation Stage)

Safer Recruitment Policy



1. General

Queen's College and Queen's College Preparatory School (hereafter 'the School') are committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the pupils in their care. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

The School is governed by the Council of Queen's College, London; Council members are trustees & governors of the School and they are registered with the Charity Commission.

The School aims to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

An entry will be made on the Single Central Register (SCR) for all current members of staff at the School, the proprietorial body and all individuals who work in regular contact with children including volunteers, supply staff and those employed as third parties.

All checks will be made in advance of appointment or as soon as practicable after appointment.

2. Scope of this Policy

The Safer Recruitment policy herewith refers and applies to staff directly recruited and employed by the School. In the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, staff are defined as:

Any person working at the School whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract, but does not include supply staff or a volunteer.

In the case of agency or contract workers, the School will obtain written confirmation from the agency or company that it has carried out the appropriate checks. The School conducts identity checks on agency and contract workers on arrival in School and, in the case of agency workers which includes supply staff, the School must be provided with a copy of the appropriate level of DBS check for such staff, where applicable. The SCR shows these checks have been made and the School undertakes its own identity check.

Certain individuals are automatically disqualified from working in senior management positions within a charity. Whether an individual falls into the category of a senior management position is judged using the following criteria:

- A person who is accountable only to the governors, and who carries overall responsibility for the day-to-day management and control of the charity; at Queen's, this would be the Principal.
- A person who is accountable only to the Principal and/or the governors, and who is responsible for the overall management and control of the charity's finances; at Queen's, this would be the Bursar.

Being disqualified means that a person cannot take on, or stay in, a senior manager position – even on an interim basis, unless the Charity Commission has removed (or 'waived') the disqualification.

In respect of contractors, unchecked contractors will under no circumstances be allowed to work unsupervised in School. The School will determine the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances.

Any staff who TUPE transfer into the School's staff will be required to undertake the statutory requirements with regard to safer recruitment checks.

3. Application Form

When absolutely necessary, the School will accept CVs from prospective candidates for the purposes of sifting and shortlisting for interview. However, shortlisted candidates will be required to complete the School's application form for interview.

The School will make candidates aware that all posts in the School involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post. Candidates for employed posts will receive a job description and person specification for the role applied for.

Checks will be made of previous employment history to ascertain satisfactory reasons for any gaps in employment. These checks will then be compared with references and any discrepancies discussed with the candidate.

The successful applicant will be required to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") check for the position and, where appropriate, a check of the Barred List will be undertaken. Any offer of employment will be conditional on obtaining such satisfactory checks. Additionally, successful applicants should be

aware that they are required to notify the School immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children. This includes any staff who are disqualified from childcare or registration.

The statutory guidance “Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006” applies to those providing early years childcare or later years childcare, including before school and after school clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 and to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.

The school takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect their suitability to work with children must notify the Principal or Headmistress immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings they may receive.

Staff and/or successful candidates who are disqualified from childcare or registration may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such individuals may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed.

If the candidate is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, the School will ask their current employer about disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young persons (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether the candidate has been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and, if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure.

If the candidate is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, the School will ask the previous employer about those issues. Where neither the current nor previous employment has involved working with children, the School will still ask the current employer about the candidate’s suitability to work with children. Where the candidate has no previous employment history, the School may request character references which may include references from the candidate's school or university.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal by the School if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

4. Invitation to Interview

The School will shortlist applicants according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. At least two people will carry out the shortlisting exercise, consider any inconsistencies, look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them, and explore all potential concerns. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which their relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration form in relation to their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records. Applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate will physically sign a hard copy of the application at the point of interview.

The School will obtain references prior to interview. This allows any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and can be taken up with the shortlisted candidate at interview.

All formal interviews will have a panel of at least two people chaired by the Principal, Headmistress, Bursar or another designated senior member of staff. It is recommended best practice that at least one person on the appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training. The Chair of the Council will chair the panel for the Bursar's, Principal's and Headmistress's appointment. The interviewers involved will be required to state any prior personal relationship or knowledge of any of the candidates and a judgement will be made by the Chair as to whether or not an interviewer should withdraw from the panel. Should the Chair have a conflict of interest, the Vice Chair shall decide whether the Chair should withdraw from the panel.

The interview will be conducted in person except in exceptional circumstances e.g. the candidate may be based overseas or the School may be closed following Government guidance, in which case it will be conducted by video conferencing or, as a last resort, by telephone. The interview will explore areas including suitability to work with children and, where appropriate, will discuss information shared by a candidate in their self-declaration form.

All candidates invited to interview must bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post e.g. the original or certified copy of certificates, diplomas etc. Where originals or

certified copies are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained by the candidate from the awarding body.

The School requests that all candidates invited to interview bring with them:

1. A current driving licence including a photograph or a passport and a birth certificate;
2. A permissible document for a DBS check, showing the candidate's current name and address e.g. utility bill, financial statement;
3. Where appropriate, any documentation evidencing a change of name;
4. Where applicable, proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK.

Originals or certified copies of the above are necessary. In exceptional circumstances, candidates can send scans or photographs of their documents and, if appointed, can provide the originals in person at the next available opportunity.

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview should inform the School of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

5. Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

1. Receipt of at least two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received);
2. Verification of identity and qualifications including, where appropriate, evidence of the right to work in the UK (if not already received);
3. A satisfactory enhanced DBS check and, if appropriate, a check of the Barred List maintained by the DBS;
4. For teaching posts, a check that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the historic General Teaching Council for England before its abolition in March 2012. Teaching work is defined in The Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 to encompass:
 - a. Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
 - b. Delivering and preparing lessons to pupils;
 - c. Assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
 - d. Reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils;
5. Verification of professional qualifications, including Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), where appropriate;

6. Verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (for teaching posts – applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999);
7. *Where the successful candidate has worked or been resident overseas:* Such further checks and confirmations as the School may consider appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. This shall include the candidate providing the School with proof of their past conduct as a teacher in the form of a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which they have worked;
8. Evidence of satisfactory medical fitness;
9. Receipt of a signed self-declaration form showing that the candidate is not disqualified from providing childcare as set out in the statutory guidance “Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006”;
10. For a candidate to be employed into a senior management position as outlined in section 2 (“Scope of this Policy”), receipt of a signed ‘senior charity manager positions: automatic disqualification declaration’ confirming that the candidate is not disqualified from acting in a senior management position for a charity in accordance with the automatic disqualification rules for charities; and
11. Where the successful candidate will be taking part in the management of the School, a check will be carried out under section 128 of the Independent Educational Provision in England (Prohibition on Participation in Management) Regulations 2014; this check applies to all governors, members of the Senior Leadership Team and heads of department.

Successful candidates must complete a pre-employment health questionnaire, which is administered by AXA. The outcome of the questionnaire will be reviewed against the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e. proposed workload, extra-curricular activities, layout of the School etc.

The School is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, considering medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

6. References

The School will seek the references referred to in section 5 above for shortlisted candidates and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview. One of the references must be from the applicant’s current or most recent employer. References must be completed by a senior person with appropriate authority. If the candidate does not

wish the School to take up references in advance of the interview, they should notify the School at the time of applying.

The School will ask all referees if the candidate is suitable to work with children.

The School will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or on open references or testimonials. The School will verify all references. Where references are received electronically, the School will ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

The School will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the application form. Any inconsistencies will be discussed with the candidate.

7. DBS Checks

The School will refer to the most up-to-date version of the Department for Education (“DfE”) document, ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ in carrying out the required DBS checks.

The School complies with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice, a copy of which may be obtained on request, or accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>

There are limited circumstances where the School will accept a DBS check from another educational institution which are as follows:

This is where the new member of staff (“M”) has worked in: –

- (a) A school or a maintained school in England in a position which brought M into regular contact with children or young persons;
- (b) A maintained school in England in a position to which M was appointed on or after May 2006 and which did not bring M into regular contact with children or young persons; or
- (c) An institution within the further education sector in England or in a 16 to 19 Academy in a position which involved the provision of education or which brought M into regular contact with children or young persons,

during a period which ended not more than three months before M’s appointment.

In these circumstances, the School ordinarily applies for a new DBS check but is not required to do so. A new, separate Barred List check will be obtained. These circumstances are usually utilised when the new DBS check has not completed in time for the start of M’s appointment.

DBS Update Service

Where an applicant subscribes to the DBS Update Service, the applicant must give consent to the School to check there have not been changes since the issue of the relevant DBS certificate. A Barred List check will also be required, if applicable.

If disclosure is delayed

If an enhanced DBS check is delayed, the Principal or Headmistress may allow the member of staff to commence work:

- Without confirming the appointment;
- After a satisfactory check of the Barred List if the person will be working in regulated activity and all other relevant checks (including any appropriate prohibition checks) having been completed satisfactorily;
- Provided that the DBS application has been made in advance;
- With appropriate safeguards taken (for example, loose supervision);
- With safeguards reviewed at least every two weeks by the Principal or Headmistress;
- The person in question is informed what these safeguards are; and
- It is recommended, but is not a requirement, that a note is added to the SCR and evidence retained of the measures implemented.

8. Retention and Security of Records

The School will comply with its obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018. Copies of DBS certificates will not ordinarily be retained but, where copies are retained, this will be for no longer than six months.

The School will comply with its data protection obligations in respect of the processing of criminal records information. More information is included in the Data Protection Policy.

Appendix: Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record, this will not automatically bar them from employment with the School. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the School to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare under the statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006".

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. The School will report the matter to the police and/or the DBS if:

- the School receives an application from a disqualified person;
- is provided with false information in, or in support of, an applicant's application; or
- the School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a DBS check, the School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;

- whether the conviction or caution is 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2020 (if "Yes", it will not be taken into account);
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- in the case of disqualification from providing childcare, whether the applicant has or is able to obtain an Ofsted waiver from disqualification; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the applicant.

If the post involves regular contact with children, the School would consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious class A drug-related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budgetary responsibilities, the School would consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves driving responsibilities, the School would consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink-driving.