



# IPSWICH SCHOOL

## RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Ipswich School recognises the need for fair, efficient and effective recruitment and selection of staff. This Policy aims to ensure that the methods we use comply with employment law, statutory guidance and with other relevant School policies, whilst meeting the School's recruitment and retention needs and maintaining the most effective skills mix throughout the School.

This policy follows the government guidance on Safer Recruitment as outlined in the *Keeping Children Safe in Education* document which is updated annually:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

We strive to ensure potential applicants are given the right messages about the School's commitment to recruit suitable people, and to ensure we create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children. As part of this culture, we will adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities, in our school (and nursery).

All Managers involved in the recruitment of staff, and the HR Director and HR Administrator, complete the recommended (NSPCC) Safer Recruitment training at regular intervals and review the Keeping Children Safe in Education (part three) guidance at least annually.

The School will act reasonably in making decisions about the suitability of the prospective employee based on relevant checks with statutory bodies, including the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), checks with past employers via references, medical information and interview information.

Our full recruitment and selection process includes preparation, efficient use of vacancy advertising, fair and objective selection, appointment, record-keeping and induction of new staff.

This policy covers all current employees and applicants for employment within the School.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

The School is committed to ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, (or any other protected characteristic) at any stage of the recruitment process, or in the terms and conditions offered to new employees or promoted employees.

All recruitment advertising aims to encourage applications from anyone who is suitably qualified and experienced and who is interested in working at the School. At the shortlisting stage, the monitoring process requires that a brief note, giving the reason for non-selection, is recorded for each applicant who is not invited for interview.

In interviews, the questioning of any candidate must avoid discrimination of any kind. The questions posed must be equally applicable to all candidates, except where they are based on a candidate's application or references. The questions are based on the skills, competencies and experience required for the post; questions put to any candidate must be comparable to those put to other candidates for the same post. All candidates, both internal and external, have rights of confidentiality and parity of process and treatment.

When interviewing is complete, reasons will be recorded to illustrate why an offer has been made (if one has) to the successful candidate, rather than any other suitable candidate, also illustrating, if appropriate, why a candidate was found unsuitable. Panel members must be prepared and able to justify their decisions if challenged. All application forms and other relevant documentation will be retained securely (in line with relevant data protection legislation) for twelve months from the date of the interview.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

If the decision to recruit is made, the job description is drawn up with input from the appropriate line manager, Director of HR, Head, Prep Head and/or Director of Finance and Operations as applicable. The job description will include all relevant information regarding the post, the School and relevant statutory information relating to Safer Recruitment, for example safeguarding requirements (i.e. to what extent the role will involve contact with children and whether candidates will be engaging in regulated activity relevant to children).

## **ADVERTISING VACANCIES**

All vacancies are advertised internally to staff in the School (via email and noticeboards) and externally on the vacancies page of the School's website [www.ipswich.school/vacancies](http://www.ipswich.school/vacancies). In addition, the senior manager responsible for the post liaises with the Director of HR/Head/Prep Head/ Director of Finance and Operations in order to place external advertisement(s) and in the local media (Suffolk Jobs Direct) or via Indeed.

An information/application pack will be provided for all applicants (which will be available on the website or by hard copy by telephoning/emailing the School), which will include a job description, a person specification if applicable, links to the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, links to information relating to the School's recruitment process (and the recruitment of ex-offenders and the handling of DBS certificate information), an application form and other relevant information about the School and the post.

The advert will include a statement to confirm the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken. The advert/job description will also make clear the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and person specification and it will make clear whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

For the appointment of the Head and Director of Finance and Operations, the process is managed and made by the Governing Body. Except for the appointment of a new Head, the Governing Body includes the Head in the shortlisting and interview panel.

For all other posts, the appointment is managed and made by the Head/Director of Finance and Operations/Prep Head/Director of HR or nominated member of staff on behalf of the Governing Body as the employers.

## **APPLICATION FORMS**

All roles in the School involve some engagement in regulated activity relevant to children and we will include a statement in the application form (and elsewhere in the application pack for applicants) that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

The application form will request personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number. Applicants will also be asked to provide details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving, together with a full employment history (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work). Reasons for gaps in employment must be clearly explained.

Applicants are also asked to give details of qualifications, the awarding body and date of award, as well as the details of two referees. They will also be asked to provide a statement of the personal qualities and experience that they believe are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification. We will not accept CVs in place of the application form.

## **SHORTLISTING**

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record, or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. This form will be sent with the interview invitation and must be returned ahead of the interview date. Self declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records, further information can be found on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk).

The self declaration form will cover whether candidates have a criminal history, whether they are on the barred list, whether they are prohibited from teaching, whether they are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school, information about any criminal offences in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, if they are known to the police or children's social services, if they have been disqualified from providing childcare, and any relevant overseas information.

This information is only requested from applicants who have been shortlisted and is not requested in the application form to decide who should be shortlisted.

Applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true, and if the self declaration has not been physically signed, they will be asked to sign the form at interview.

We will ensure that at least two people carry out the shortlisting and consider any inconsistencies and gaps in employment and reasons given for them, and explore all potential concerns.

As part of our shortlisting process, we will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with candidates at interview.

## **INTERNAL CANDIDATES**

Internal candidates are treated in the same manner as external candidates; it is their responsibility to ensure their application contains all relevant information and at interview they answer the questions fully, rather than relying on reputation. Internal candidates may request feedback from their interview, which will be based on their own application, and given as soon as practicable after the decision.

## **INTERVIEWS**

The panel consists of at least two people, one of whom is the manager responsible for the post. One member of the panel should have appropriate Safeguarding Children (Safer Recruitment) training. Other persons whose specialist knowledge is useful in the selection process may be involved, e.g. to observe a demonstration lesson or other skills test. Pupils may be involved as appropriate (i.e. candidates for teaching posts may be observed teaching a class or a sports coach may be asked to lead a training session).

For some roles in the School competency tests or trade tests (for example in catering roles) may be included as part of the interview process, together with tours of the School or informal meetings with prospective colleagues.

## **SELECTION**

We will use a range of techniques to identify the most suitable person for each post. Staff who are interviewing will agree structured questions to find out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation to work with children. The questions will explore skills and ask for examples of experience of working with children that are relevant to the role. Interviewers will probe any gaps in employment or, where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, ask about the reasons for this.

We will use interviews to explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children, including their understanding of safeguarding matters, information from online searches, and past disciplinary action and allegations.

## **INTERVIEW RECORDS**

Signed, written records detailing the process adopted and the reasons for the actual outcome are maintained confidentially (in accordance with data protection legislation) for twelve months from the date of the interviews.

## **INDUCTION**

Following completion of all pre-employment checks, the new member of staff is welcomed and given the necessary induction training to enable them to fulfil their role effectively. Any initial professional training that

has been agreed at interview will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS**

Any offer of employment made to a successful candidate will be conditional on satisfactory completion of the following pre-employment checks as required by the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance:

### **Identity Checks**

- We will verify a candidate's identity as required by the DBS, see GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-identity-checking-guidelines>

### **Disclosure and Barring Service Checks**

- We will obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity).
- If an Update Service DBS is held, we will ask to see the original certificate and obtain consent from the candidate before undertaking an online Update Service check. We will also confirm the DBS certificate matches the individual's identity. We will examine the original certificate to ensure that it is valid for the children's workforce and is at the right level appropriate to the job the candidate is applying for.
- We will obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available. A risk assessment will be completed and authorised by the Head in these circumstances, and the risk assessment will be reviewed regularly pending receipt of the *disclosure* certificate.

### **Information to be obtained/verified at interview**

- We will ensure we hold a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment history.
- We will ensure at interview that an appropriately trained member of staff confirms that there are no concerns (based on the questions answered, conversation held, application form and self declaration form completed and references received), that the applicant has the ability to support the School's Safeguarding Policy and there is no information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

### **Mental and Physical Fitness**

- We will verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities and consider the need for any special adjustments or adaptations.
- An applicant can be asked at interview relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role for which they are applying. Candidates are also asked to confirm this on their application form.
- Following an offer of employment, we ask applicants to complete either a self-declaration or health questionnaire which is reviewed by the School's Occupational Health Practitioner, who will confirm the person is fit to work in the role, and also whether special adjustments or adaptations are required.

## **Right to Work in the UK**

- We will verify the candidate's right to work in the UK in line with government guidance, including EU nationals <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work> .
- We will check for any restrictions to the candidates right to live and work in the UK which might affect their right to take up employment with us in a specific post.

## **Candidates who have lived/worked overseas**

- We will check whether an applicant has committed any offences in any country (in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales) and/or whether they are subject to any sanctions relating to working with children in any country outside the UK.
- If the applicant has lived or worked outside the UK, we will make any further checks we consider appropriate after referring to the Home Office guidance on criminal records checks for overseas applicants (and KCSIE guidance):  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>.
- For teaching positions, we may require a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the candidate has worked confirming they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and/or that they are unaware of any reason why the candidate may be unsuitable to teach.

## **Teaching Prohibitions, Sanctions and Restrictions**

- We will verify whether a candidate is, or has ever been, subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, or had sanctions or restrictions imposed (that remain current) by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) (before its abolition in 2012) or the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

## **Qualifications**

- We will verify professional qualifications as appropriate (preferably at interview).
- We will use the Teaching Regulation Agency's (TRA) Employer Access Service to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS) and the completion of teacher induction or probation.

## **Management of Independent Schools**

- We will check that a person taking up a management position in the School is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State.

## **Childcare Disqualification**

- We will check to ensure a candidate is not disqualified from working with children under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 (if relevant to the post applied for).

Note: further information on the staff to whom these regulations apply can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006>

## References

- We will always ask for written information (by way of at least two satisfactory references) about an applicant's previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.
- The purpose of seeking references is to allow the School to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.
- References are always obtained from the candidate's current employer. Where a candidate is not currently employed, verification of their most recent period of employment and reasons for leaving are obtained from the school, college or organisation at which they were employed.
- We will secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If the applicant has never worked with children, then we will ensure we secure a reference from their current employer. This is to ensure that appropriate enquiries are made to prevent unsuitable people from working with young people.
- References are scrutinised and any concerns discussed and resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed, including for any internal candidate (preferably at or before the interview stage).
- Unless candidates have clearly indicated that they do not wish referees to be approached prior to interview we will obtain references before interview.
- There must be exceptional circumstances for the School not to request references prior to interview, or prior to an offer of employment being made. Obtaining references before interview, allows any concerns they raise to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.
- References are always requested directly from the referee and preferably from a senior person with appropriate authority, not just a colleague (if the referee is school or college based, the reference will be confirmed by the head as accurate in respect of disciplinary investigations).
- We do not accept 'open references' e.g. 'to whom it may concern' and we do not rely on applicants to obtain their reference.
- We will always contact the referee as necessary to verify information or to ask them to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example if the answers are vague or if insufficient information is provided.
- We will always ensure electronic references are from a legitimate source.
- We will compare the information on the application/self declaration form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate.
- We will establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post.
- Any information supplied about past disciplinary action or allegations that are disclosed will be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post.
- The HR Director/Head/Prep Head considers the references to ascertain whether there are any issues that need to be discussed with a potential employee to ensure a fair and effective appointment.

## SAFEGUARDING

As outlined above, the School adopts recruitment procedures that help deter and prevent people who might abuse children from securing employment at the school.

The conditional offer of employment is effectively a proposal to enter into a contract of employment subject

to the receipt of all necessary pre-employment checks (as outlined above).

Details of pre-employment checks completed will be entered on the School's SCR (Single Central Register of appointments).

## **RECORDS**

The School collects and processes certain types of data about applicants applying to work at the School and does so in line with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act in force from time to time. For more information please refer the School's Employee Privacy Notice which is available on the website: [www.ipswich.school](http://www.ipswich.school).

Reviewed September 2025

('School' in this policy includes all divisions and departments within the School, including The Lodge Day Nursery, Prep School, Senior School and Ipswich School Enterprises Ltd).