BRIDGEWATER SCHOOL

WORSLEY, MANCHESTER

M28 2WQ

WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY FOR SAFER RECRUITMENT OF STAFF

SCOPE: The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Bridgewater School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

In line with recent legislation including the Children Act 2004, The Independent Schools Standards Guidance April 2026, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the 'Recruitment of Ex-Offenders' Policy, the school takes very seriously its duty of care for all pupils. In order to help safeguard and promote the welfare of all its pupils, the school is committed to a thorough and consistent Safer Recruitment Policy.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Safer Recruitment Policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The school has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

The policy objectives are to operate these procedures consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at Bridgewater School.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Advertising

Where the school advertises a vacant post, it will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and that safeguarding checks will be undertaken as part of the recruitment process. Standardly the school will advertise a post via the school's website but may also publish an external advertisement.

However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with GDPR.

Application Forms

Bridgewater School uses its own application form and all job applicants will be required to complete it. The form contains questions about academic qualifications, full employment history (including reasons for leaving employment) and suitability for the role. Any gaps in employment must be fully explained. CVs may be submitted initially with a covering letter but a full application form is still required from all applicants. Peripatetic Staff are permitted to supply comprehensive CVs as they are not directly employed by school but, in line with the KCSIE requirement for an application form to be completed by all staff, we request that they complete the employment history section of the school's application form.

All applicants will also be supplied with a copy of the school's Safeguarding Policy.

All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a self-declaration form prior to interview. The declaration form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. See Appendix A.

All applicants will be made 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.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, it will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

Applicants will also be supplied with a person specification. The person specification is of equal importance and assists in the selection process. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children.

References

References for short listed applicants for teaching roles will be sent for immediately after short listing. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview and prior to any formal offer of employment being made. Two professional/character references must be provided (for teaching staff both must be professional references). These will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

Any reference from an applicant's current employer should have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority. A reference from a school or college should include confirmation from the Head Teacher that it is accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations.

The school 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, the school will ensure a reference is taken from their current employer.

The school will always verify any information provided with the person who provided the reference and electronic references will be verified as coming from a legitimate source.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with a referee to verify the reference.

The school will ensure that any concerns arising from a reference are resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.

For non-teaching roles, references will be sought after the job offer has been made but before the candidate commences employment. If the references are not satisfactory, the job offer will be withdrawn.

The school does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process, school will carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of vetting due diligence. Candidates are informed of this in the declaration at the end of the school application form. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publically available online which school may want to explore with the candidate at interview.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and the same panel will see all the short listed applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps that have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria.

Any information concerning past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process.

The school governors will ensure that those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training and that at least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken such training.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address, right to work in the UK (UK birth certificate preferred) and qualifications. Original documentation will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. They will also be asked to provide original signatures on any documents that have been electronically signed.

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

The appointment of all new employees is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced DBS certificate including Barred List check and disqualification from childcare, at least two references, medical checks, copies of qualifications and proof of address, proof of identity and right to work in the UK. Where the vacancy is for a teaching position, the school will carry out a teacher status check via https://check-a-teachers-record.education.gov.uk (DfE sign-in credentials will be required in order to obtain this information). If the applicant's name appears as being prohibited from teaching, the process will be stopped and the relevant notifications made. Similarly, if the vacancy is for a management position, a further check with gov.uk/government/collections/individuals-prohibited-from-managing-or-governing-schools will be made to ascertain if the applicant has been banned from management. A

personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment requirements. The checklist will be retained on personal files. An offer and start date will be confirmed subject to receipt of all paperwork.

Support staff will also be advised in their offer letter that they are employed on a 13 week probationary basis.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions that involve working with, or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at Bridgewater School. See the separate 'Recruitment of Ex-Offenders' Policy.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate

All staff at Bridgewater School require an enhanced DBS Certificate with barred list check and therefore a DBS Certificate must be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee unless they already possess a portable DBS.

Members of staff at Bridgewater School are aware of their obligation to inform the Head Teacher/Bursar of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

Portability of DBS Certificates Checks

ISI does facilitate portability of DBS Certificates as long as the applicant has registered with the DBS Update Service. Bridgewater School is committed to adhering to this code of practice.

The school will seek consent from the applicant to carry out a barred list check and a check with the update service.

For clarity, portability refers to the re-use of a DBS Certificate obtained for a position in one organisation and later used for another position in another organisation.

In the rare circumstance that there is a delay in processing a new certificate, the school will accept a previous enhanced DBS when the person has been employed within education in the last 3 months. In this circumstance, the school will also carry out a barred list check (with consent) through https://check-the-childrens-barred-list-education.gov.uk (again, valid DBS sign-in credentials will be required to perform this check). A risk assessment must also be completed and signed off by the Head Teacher and/or a DSL/DDSL and enhanced supervision put in place.

All new employees who are bringing in an existing enhanced DBS (under the three-month rule or a portable DBS) must show the original paper DBS certificate to the school prior to starting work. Where the school has processed the DBS full details can be viewed online.

Dealing with convictions

The school operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and:

- the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the Head Teacher and/or the Bursar. A decision will be made following this meeting and any subsequent risk assessment will be signed off by the Head Teacher and/or a DSL/DDSL. For further details, see the 'Recruitment of Ex-Offenders' Policy.

Teacher Status Check

The school will access https://check-a-teachers-record.education.gov.uk, this will enable the school to check whether a teacher has:

- Qualified teacher status (QTS)
- Completed/failed their induction and probation period
- An active teaching restriction
- Been the subject of a decision by the Secretary of State to impose a prohibition order for unacceptable professional conduct,conduct that may bring the teaching profession into disrepute or conviction of a relevant offence
- Been prohibited from teaching
- A suspension or conditional order imposed by the General Teaching Council for England that is still current
- Been prohibited from management (via gov.uk/government/collections/individuals-prohibited-from-managing-or-governing-schools)

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status.

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS Code of Practice Regulations. KCSIE recommends that best practice is to verify an applicant's identity by checking the name on their birth certificate although this is not always readily available. Proof of address is also required at interview which can be in the form of a utility bill, bank statement, mortgage statement etc.

In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Medical Fitness

Anyone appointed to a post involving regular contact with children must possess the appropriate level of physical and mental fitness before any appointment offer is confirmed. All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required.

Overseas checks

All prospective new employees where persons have lived/worked outside the UK within the last 5 years are subject to additional checks in accordance with Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. New employees must produce a Certificate of Good Conduct or similar document from the country in which they have worked. Where this is not possible, the school will apply for references from the employers from the country in which they have worked. Details can be found on https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants as to what checks are available in the various countries and what the requirements are to obtain them.

Induction

All new employees will be given an induction that will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, and make clear the expectation and codes of conduct that will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities. They will also be requested to undertake online courses in Safeguarding, Prevent, Anaphylaxis Awareness, Manual Handling, Health & Safety and Fire Safety.

New employees will also be required to sign that they have read and understood both the Safeguarding and Code of Conduct policies. In addition, if an employee's position involves working on a computer with internet access, they must read and sign the relevant acceptable use policy.

New teachers will be provided with a list of additional policies and training that they need to undertake.

Supply Staff

Where the school uses the services of a supply agency, the agency must provide evidence that they have carried out the required safeguarding checks and all other appropriate checks in line with KCSIE guidelines. This must be forwarded to the school in advance of the supply staff member arriving on site. School has forwarded to the nominated supply agencies copies of the Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct for Staff Policy that supply staff must read before they start. On arrival, the supply staff member must provide photographic proof of ID along with their original DBS. They will then be handed a copy of the Supply Staff booklet which represents a condensed induction and includes relevant safeguarding information and DSL contact details. This should be read before they start working in the school.

Governor Recruitment

Following a letter to recruit/seek new governors, candidates apply via an application form and a 100 word (maximum) written profile. Where this is a Parent Governor application, the profile of all applicants is circulated to parents who then vote for their preferred candidate. The new governor will require an enhanced DBS with barred list check after providing proof of ID and verification that they can work in the UK. Checks are made via https://check-a-teachers-record.education.gov.uk and gov.uk/government/collections/individuals-prohibited-from-managing-or-governing-schools that they are not prohibited from teaching or leadership and they must sign a declaration to confirm that they are not prohibited from working with children. Proof of good conduct will also be requested if they have worked abroad in the last 5 years.

A new Chair of Governors must apply for their DBS directly with the DfE that will be signed off by the Secretary of State.

All new governors undertake New Governor and Governor Safeguarding courses (via Educare) and Prevent Training via the Home Office. They are subsequently invited to attend any Safeguarding Update sessions from the local authority hosted by the school. In addition, they are asked to read the relevant part of KCSIE Part 2 relating to governor responsibilities.

Trainee/Student Teachers

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. School will obtain written confirmation from the provider that it has carried out all pre-appointment checks that the school would otherwise be required to perform and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children. The Trainee/Student Teacher should bring proof of ID and their original DBS on their first day.

Third Party School Transport

Where the school uses third party companies for school transport, the companies must provide evidence that they have completed all safeguarding checks on the drivers in line with KCSIE guidelines. School will need to see the ID for the drivers along with originals of their DBSs.

Volunteers

All volunteers are risk assessed (the risk assessment is always signed off by a DSL/DDSL). Any person volunteering in school in a role that involves teaching, training, instructing or supervising children frequently or on more than 3 days out of a 30 day period is now in regulated activity. We must, therefore, obtain an enhanced DBS with barred list in these circumstances.

Centralised Register of Members of Staff

In addition to individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the DfE requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Bursar's Office. The Centralised Register will contain details of the following:-

- all employees who are employed to work at the school;
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly or through an agency;
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will include governors and peripatetic staff (volunteers are logged separately along with their risk assessment forms).
- Third party drivers are recorded under a separate tab on the SCR.

Record Retention / Data Protection

Bridgewater School will retain all interview notes on all applicants for six months. This will allow the school to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to an Employment Tribunal.

All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Bursar's Office in a locked and secure cabinet or archived in a locked room.

Leaving Employment at Bridgewater School

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of abuse against children and young people are raised. In cases relating to the behaviour of an

employee (these behaviours are within the context of four categories of abuse (i.e.: physical, sexual and emotional and neglect) the School's Disciplinary Policy will apply.

In cases of dismissal (or resignation) due to the above behaviour, Bridgewater School will inform the DfE, Children's Safeguarding Board, TRA and DBS of the circumstances why the employee is leaving Bridgewater School's employment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher and the Bursar will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and applied throughout the school.

Reviewed by the Bursar, Head Teacher and Senior Management Team – October 2026