



## **SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY**

**Reviewed by Governors:** September 2024

**Next review:** September 2025

### **INTRODUCTION**

Little Ilford School is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children. We need to ensure that our recruitment policies and practices are robust and contain the necessary measures to enable us to employ a workforce that will honour this commitment.

The following policy and guidance has been written with full regard to the findings and recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry, the *Keeping Children Safe in Education* report (2022) and the Prevent strategy.

### **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

***Little Ilford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.***

Little Ilford School will:

Ensure that all advertisements for jobs at the school include the following statement:

***The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children***

***and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An enhanced DBS check is required for all successful candidates.***

## **POSTS REQUIRING CLEARANCE**

Any adult working/volunteering who has unsupervised access to children (regardless of regularity or duration) at Little Ilford School will be subject to an enhanced DBS clearance.

The criteria applies equally to all types of employment, whether or not an established post, such as permanent, temporary, casual, supply, volunteer/unpaid, or self-employed. If agencies are used, agency staff must be subject to the same checks as permanent staff. The Human Resources officer will obtain and record confirmation from the agency that clearance has occurred.

The criteria also applies to non-employment arrangements, acting on behalf of the Authority, such as school Governors, Elected Members and contractors.

## **RECRUITMENT, ASSESSMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS**

The following provides the minimum essential requirements when recruiting to such positions, including voluntary and unpaid positions as referred to above:

### **Advertising**

The advertising process will ensure the following is clear:

- Little Ilford school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, with links for all relevant school policies
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken, i.e. subject to the Enhanced Disclosure regime.
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children
- That the robust recruitment and selection processes on which we rely are communicated to all who provide services on our behalf (e.g. contractors, sports coaches, sessional workers, music tutors and volunteers).
- 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 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account
- All those leading recruitment and selection processes are aware of safe and robust recruitment and selection procedure and undergo appropriate training programmes regularly.

Prospective applicants are supplied, the following, as a minimum:

- Job description and person specification
- The school's Safer Recruitment Policy (this document) and the safeguarding policy
- The selection procedure for the post
- An application form (CVs will not be accepted).

### **Application forms**

The application forms will:

- 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)
- Include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders
- Meet the latest safer recruitment requirements, as advertised by the Borough.

### **Shortlisting**

The shortlisting process involves at least 2 people and will:

- take place against the person specification for the post. Please note that feedback will not be given to candidates who are not shortlisted.
- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- Explore all potential concerns
- Once we have shortlisted candidates, ask shortlisted candidates 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.
  - The information we will ask for includes:
    - If they have a criminal history
    - Whether they are included on the barred list
    - Whether they are prohibited from teaching
    - Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
    - Any relevant overseas information
    - Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true
- Include an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online.

All shortlisted applicants who perform adequately in pre-interview tests have face-to-face interviews.

### **Seeking references and checking employment history**

- References are requested for all shortlisted applicants and the school should be in receipt of them prior to the interview.
- Any discrepancies will be clarified with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.
- Candidates must have a reference from their current, or most recent, employer.
- When seeking references, we will:
  - Not accept open “to whom it may concern” references provided by the applicant
  - Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees
  - Ensure any references are from the candidate’s current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
  - Obtain verification of the candidate’s most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
  - Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children

- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

### **Interview and selection**

When interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made
- Complete pre-appointment vetting checks
  - We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). 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.

When a positive DBS check is received, the judgements made are consistent with the appropriate level.

Staff involved in the recruitment process and/or in a position of responsibility within the school must inform the Headteacher if they have a personal relationship/friendship/past employment relationship with anyone shortlisted.

- Applicants are asked specific questions at interview examining attitudes towards children and young people.
- There is effective scrutiny of the information provided by applicants, such as gaps in employment or educational history. All discrepancies are checked and followed up.
- With regard to overseas staff, the same checks will be made as for all other staff, but should additionally include a certificate of good conduct from their home police force or embassy, as well as from other countries where they have worked. DBS disclosures do not detail offences committed abroad.

### **All successful applicants are required to:**

- provide proof of identity (e.g. passport; driving licence photocard)
- complete a DBS disclosure application and receive satisfactory clearance;
- obtain a barred list check if the individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available;
- complete a confidential health questionnaire to verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities;
- provide actual certificates of professional qualifications (teaching staff or where required);
- provide proof of address (e.g. recent utility bill, bank or credit card statement)
- provide proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK.

Documentation will be checked by a member of staff suitably trained in safer recruitment processes.

The final offer of employment will be subject to:

- a satisfactory enhanced DBS and barred list check;
- confirmation that the candidate does not live with a disqualified person [if the member of staff is expected to work with children under the age of 8 (e.g. staff working with partner primary children unsupervised)];
- a check that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order using the Employer Access Online Service (teachers only);
- receipt of the completed health check questionnaire;
- receipt of final references from previous employers;
- a valid work permit for overseas candidates;
- the candidate's details being added to the school's Single Central Record (SCR).

Applicants receive an induction and appropriate training in Child Protection issues and training on the Prevent Duty within 5 days.

Successful candidates' attitudes and behaviour will continue to be monitored/supervised post-appointment.

Other requirements exist under the code of practice, which will be supported by comprehensive and compulsory training. Additionally, any officer, Elected Member, Headteacher or Governor involved in recruitment to posts with access to children are required to complete safer recruitment training.

Facilitate such checks on a voluntary basis, to ensure maximum management of risk in the protection of children.

## **POSITIVE DISCLOSURES**

The term "positive disclosure" refers to a disclosure containing information relating to convictions, cautions, reprimands, etc., plus "soft information" relating to non-convictions, but which police forces deem relevant. If a positive disclosure is received for an employee who has already commenced work, the individual should be immediately withdrawn pending further enquiries.

Little Ilford School will follow a consistent process for considering such disclosures and for making subsequent judgements regarding an applicant's suitability for employment.

### **The following key stages must occur in the process:**

- Positive disclosure should be passed to the Headteacher who will liaise with a Senior Personnel Officer (if appropriate) at Newham Schools HR.
- The Headteacher will do an initial assessment of whether the offence(s) listed are sufficiently serious to cause concern. This assessment will be in accordance with the following checklist:
  - The seriousness and nature of the offence(s)
  - The nature of the appointment
  - Length of time since the offence(s) occurred

- Number and pattern of offences
- The applicant's age at the time
- Any explanation of the circumstances that may have already been given
- Concealment of offences at application stage. If offences were not declared, this will automatically warrant an interview with the applicant.
- Judgements at this stage will often err on the side of caution.

If the Headteacher and Human Resources Officer recommend that the offence(s) is/are not sufficiently serious to warrant an interview, the decision to employ will be signed off by the Headteacher.

If it is judged that an interview is necessary, this should be undertaken between the Headteacher/Newham Personnel Officer and the prospective employee. Another officer should be present, such as an appropriate senior manager or the school's Personnel Officer.

The meeting is an essential part of the process, as it is necessary to verify that the information contained in the disclosure does indeed relate to the individual concerned. This verification must be sought prior to any judgements being made. There have been occasions where DBS system errors have occurred and information supplied has been wrongly attributed to individuals.

The disclosure should be discussed with the prospective employee. The discussion will aid the decision-making process, and should again broadly focus around the following:

- The seriousness and nature of the offence(s)
- The nature of the appointment
- Length of time since the offence(s) occurred
- Number and pattern of offences
- The applicant's age at the time, circumstances/explanation
- Concealment of offences at application stage

Based upon the findings of the interview, the Headteacher will undertake a risk assessment with regard to the suitability of the employee. Judgements regarding suitability are not wholly confined to the disclosure revealing offences against children. Other types of offences may render a prospective employee unsuitable. In addition to convictions or cautions, this may also include having harmed or placed children at risk of harm or having exhibited behaviour which leads to the belief that there may be a child at risk of harm in the future.

The Headteacher should not take the decision in isolation, but will be accountable for it. There should be a clear record made of the decision, bearing the judgement and signature of the accountable Headteacher/Head of Service (see "Record Keeping", paragraphs 25-28, and appendix 3). This judgement should not contain details of the offences.

## **RECORD KEEPING**

Little Ilford School keeps a Single Central Record (SCR) collating when, and by whom, checks on the identity, qualifications and outcomes of List 99 and DBS checks on staff were made. Newham School's HR to also keep similar records. Information disclosed as part of a DBS check must be treated as confidential.

For supply staff, the SCR includes whether written confirmation has been received that the

employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, and the date that confirmation was received and whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of staff.

Staff who are in school for up to a week have their DBS and photo ID checked by the cover organiser. If the supply is longer term, the teacher is entered onto the SCR and additional checks are made (e.g. passport, bill with proof of address, QTS certificates, NI number etc.). The SCR includes a record of the safeguarding training received by staff, including confirmation that each staff member has signed to affirm that they have read the relevant section of the Keep Children Safe in Education document. Every staff member receives an update in safeguarding training on an annual basis.