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# Susi Earnshaw Theatre School

# Safer Recruitment Policy

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| Date: August 2025 | Next review: August 2026 |
| Ratified by: Susi Earnshaw (Proprietor) | |

**1. Introduction**

Susi Earnshaw Theatre School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard children and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment in which every child can thrive. This Safer Recruitment Policy is essential to achieving that aim.

This policy sets out the procedures for recruiting and selecting staff, agency staff, and volunteers. It is designed to help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children or who are otherwise unsuitable to work with them. It is compliant with all current legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:

* Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
* The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice
* The Education Act 2002
* The Equality Act 2010

**2. Scope and Objectives**

This policy applies to all staff members, agency staff, and volunteers involved in the recruitment and selection process at Susi Earnshaw Theatre School. The objectives of this policy are to:

* Ensure that all recruitment and selection processes are conducted in a fair, consistent, and professional manner.
* Attract the best possible candidates to vacancies based on their skills, experience, qualifications, and suitability to work with children.
* Deter and prevent unsuitable people from applying for or being appointed to positions that involve working with children.
* Identify and reject candidates who are unsuitable to work with children.
* Comply with all relevant legislation, statutory guidance, and best practice in safer recruitment.
* Promote a culture of vigilance and safeguarding within the school.

**3. Principles**

The following principles underpin this policy:

* **Child Welfare:** The welfare of the child is paramount in all recruitment decisions.
* **Equal Opportunities:** All applicants will be treated fairly and equitably, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
* **Transparency:** The recruitment and selection process will be open and transparent.
* **Due Diligence:** All necessary checks will be carried out to verify the suitability of candidates to work with children.
* **Accountability:** Those involved in the recruitment process are accountable for ensuring that it is carried out in accordance with this policy.
* **Confidentiality:** Information provided by applicants will be treated with confidentiality, in accordance with data protection legislation.
* **Continuous Improvement:** This policy and the school’s recruitment practices will be regularly reviewed and improved.

**4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The following individuals and bodies have specific roles and responsibilities in the implementation of this policy:

* **The Proprietor:** The proprietor has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all relevant legislation and guidance in relation to safer recruitment.
* **The Headteacher:** The Headteacher is responsible for:
  + Overseeing the implementation of this policy.
  + Ensuring that all staff involved in the recruitment process are appropriately trained.
  + Making the final decision on the appointment of staff, taking into account all relevant information.
* **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The DSL will be involved in the recruitment process, particularly where safeguarding concerns are identified.
* **Recruitment Panel:**
  + The recruitment panel will be responsible for shortlisting, interviewing, and recommending candidates for appointment.
  + At least one member of every recruitment panel will have undertaken accredited Safer Recruitment training.
* **All Staff Involved in Recruitment:** All staff involved in the recruitment process must:
  + Read, understand, and comply with this policy.
  + Attend Safer Recruitment training.
  + Carry out their duties in a way that minimises the risk to children.
  + Maintain accurate and confidential records of the recruitment process.

**5. The Recruitment Process**

The following process will be followed for all appointments:

**5.1 Identifying the Need**

* The Headteacher, in consultation with the proprietor, will identify the need for a vacancy and the specific requirements of the role.

**5.2 Job Description and Person Specification**

* A detailed job description and person specification will be developed, clearly outlining:
  + The duties and responsibilities of the post.
  + The essential and desirable skills, experience, qualifications, and competencies required.
  + The school’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
  + The checks that will be carried out on the successful candidate.

**5.3 Advertising the Vacancy**

* Vacancies will be advertised in appropriate media to attract a wide field of suitable candidates.
* All advertisements will:
  + State the school’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
  + Encourage applications from suitably qualified candidates.
  + Provide clear information about the post and the application process.
  + Indicate that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
  + State that an Enhanced DBS check will be required.

**5.4 Application Process**

* Applicants will be required to complete a formal application form. Curriculum Vitae (CVs) will not be accepted in isolation or as a substitute for a completed application form.
* The application form will:
  + Gather comprehensive information about the applicant’s employment history, including reasons for leaving previous positions and any gaps in employment.
  + Require applicants to declare any convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, including those deemed as spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended) and those that are not subject to filtering.
  + Include a self-declaration about their suitability to work with children.
  + Require applicants to provide the names, addresses, and contact details of at least two referees. One referee must be the current or most recent employer, where the applicant worked with children.
  + Ask specific questions related to safeguarding.
  + Include a statement that providing false or misleading information is an offence and could lead to disqualification or dismissal.

**5.5 Shortlisting**

* A shortlisting panel, comprising at least two people who have received Safer Recruitment training, will assess applications against the essential criteria outlined in the person specification.
* The panel will:
  + Carefully scrutinise each application.
  + Identify any discrepancies, gaps in employment, or inconsistencies that need to be explored further.
  + Ensure that the shortlisting process is fair and objective.
  + Record the reasons for shortlisting or not shortlisting each candidate.

**5.6 References**

* The school will obtain at least two written references for shortlisted candidates.
* One reference must be from the candidate's current or most recent employer, particularly if that employment involved working with children.
* References will be requested directly from the referees. Testimonials or open references provided by the candidate will not be accepted.
* A standardised reference request form will be used, which includes specific questions about the candidate's:
  + Suitability to work with children.
  + Safeguarding knowledge, understanding, and practice.
  + Experience of working with children.
  + Attitude towards children.
  + Ability to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
  + Any disciplinary issues, including those related to child protection, or allegations of abuse or misconduct.
  + Overall suitability for the role.
* Any concerns arising from the references will be explored with the referee and, if necessary, with the candidate at interview.
* If references raise significant concerns, the candidate's application may be terminated.

**5.7 Interview Process**

* The interview panel will consist of at least two people who have received Safer Recruitment training.
* The interview process will be structured to:
  + Explore the candidate's qualifications, experience, and skills in relation to the job description and person specification.
  + Assess the candidate's understanding of and commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
  + Explore any issues or discrepancies arising from the application form or references.
  + Assess the candidate's ability to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
  + Include specific questions on safeguarding, child protection, and related issues.
  + Evaluate the candidate's motivation for working with children and their understanding of the challenges and rewards of working in a school environment.
* All panel members will be aware of the need to avoid discriminatory questions and to maintain professional boundaries throughout the interview process.
* The panel will keep detailed records of each interview.

**5.8 Pre-Appointment Checks**

* Any offer of appointment will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of the following pre-employment checks:
  + **Verification of Identity:** The identity of the successful candidate will be verified using original documents (e.g., passport, driving license, birth certificate).
  + **Right to Work in the UK:** The candidate's right to work in the UK will be verified in accordance with Home Office guidance.
  + **Qualifications and Professional Status:** Qualifications and professional status (where applicable) will be verified.
  + **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check:**
    - An Enhanced DBS check, including a check of the Barred List, will be obtained for all successful candidates.
    - The school will ensure that the DBS check is appropriate to the role and level of contact with children.
    - Candidates will be informed that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and that all convictions, cautions, and bind-overs, including spent convictions, must be disclosed.
    - The school will subscribe to the DBS Update Service, where appropriate.
  + **Overseas Checks:** If the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, appropriate checks will be carried out in accordance with statutory guidance.
  + **Online Checks:** The school may conduct online searches to identify any publicly available information that could be relevant to the candidate's suitability to work with children. Any information found will be considered in the context of the role and discussed with the candidate.
  + **Medical Fitness:** The candidate may be required to complete a medical declaration or undergo a medical examination to ensure they are physically and mentally fit to carry out the duties of the post.

**6. DBS Checks and Risk Assessment**

* As an organisation that works with children, Susi Earnshaw Theatre School will obtain Enhanced DBS checks for all staff members, agency staff, and volunteers who engage in regulated activity with children.
* The school will adhere to the DBS Code of Practice and will ensure that DBS checks are carried out in accordance with current legislation and guidance.
* The school will inform candidates that providing false information or failing to disclose relevant information is a criminal offence and could lead to the withdrawal of the job offer.
* Any information revealed on a DBS check will be assessed in relation to the specific post and in accordance with the school's Risk Assessment of Offences Policy.
* The school will ensure that a senior member of staff is trained to interpret DBS certificates.

**7. Single Central Record (SCR)**

* The school will maintain an accurate and up-to-date Single Central Record (SCR) of all pre-employment checks carried out on staff members, agency staff, and volunteers.
* The SCR will include details of:
  + Identity checks.
  + Right to work checks.
  + Qualifications and professional status checks.
  + DBS checks.
  + Overseas checks (where applicable).
  + References.
* The SCR will be kept securely and will be made available for inspection by Ofsted or other relevant authorities.

**8. Induction**

* All new staff members, agency staff, and volunteers will receive a thorough induction, which will include:
  + The school’s safeguarding policy and procedures.
  + The Staff Code of Conduct.
  + Information about child protection and safeguarding.
  + Guidance on maintaining professional boundaries.
  + Reporting concerns.

**9. Ongoing Safeguarding**

* Safer recruitment is not a one-off event. The school will ensure the ongoing safeguarding of children by:
  + Providing regular safeguarding training for all staff.
  + Ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities to report safeguarding concerns.
  + Maintaining a culture of vigilance.
  + Regularly reviewing and updating safeguarding policies and procedures.

**10. Policy Review**

* This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if required, to ensure that it remains compliant with the latest legislation, guidance, and best practice.
* The school will seek feedback from staff and other stakeholders on the effectiveness of this policy.

This enhanced policy provides a more detailed and robust framework for safer recruitment at Susi Earnshaw Theatre School.