



Methodist Independent Schools Trust

Outline Safer Recruitment Procedures – MIST guidance to schools (September 2021)

This guidance does not replace the detailed procedures that must be in operation in each school and subject to inspection under ISI and DfE standards as may be updated from time to time. The purpose of the guidance in this note is to offer schools a summary checklist of things that should be in place that will enable schools in the MIST Group to discharge their safer recruitment responsibilities but does not supersede that fact that it is each school's responsibility to ensure that they operate in accordance with the most recent guidance issued by the DfE and ISI.

Making safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children an integral factor in HR management is an essential part of creating safe environments for children and young people.

A school's policy and procedure for safer recruitment must:

- Apply to all appointments including volunteers and governors, temporary agency/contract staff and employees who even though they may not have unsupervised access to children may be assumed to be trustworthy and safe because of their regular presence in the school.
- Have a clearly evidenced record of recruitment checks, interview notes and training including but not limited to complete and accurate completion of the staff central register (SCR).
- Be scrutinised on a not less than annual basis by governors or the nominated governor for safeguarding and reported formally to governors accordingly

1. The recruitment process

- The advert for any vacancy will state whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore subject to an enhanced DBS certificate AND, if regulated activity, a children's barred list check.
- The advert will emphasise that the school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Such information should also be highlighted in advertisements for vacancies, candidate information packs and job descriptions
- Any appointment should require the completion of a standard application form to ensure all relevant information about every applicant is collected prior to interview and/or prior to appointment
- All shortlisted candidates should be required to complete a self-disclosure of criminal and other suitability information; this should be scrutinised before interview
- No appointment should be made in a school without at least two written references being received and checked/authenticated. This should be in accordance with KCSiE (DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education) and ISI safer recruitment best practice guidelines. Wherever possible, the references should be taken up and read prior to interview
- References need to be provided directly by a referee with appropriate seniority; if the reference is from a school, it should be provided by, or countersigned by, the Head
- References should be scrutinised, cross-referenced against other application details and authenticated by contacting the person who provided the reference. The source of electronic references should always be verified. Written records of these checks need to be



kept.

2. The appointment process

Assuming the application form and references have been collected and authenticated as per guidance above then additionally any appointment must be conditional upon:

- Shortlisting should be undertaken by at least two people; the same people should be involved in the interviews
- Face to face interviews to include appropriate questions about child protection and safeguarding
- Interviews should be conducted by at least two suitable staff, at least one of whom should have completed safer recruitment training
- Candidates must be requested to provide a full employment history since leaving full time education. Any gaps in the work history must be checked and completed at interview.
- Evidence of their identity (including the birth certificate, where possible) and qualifications should be checked
- The candidate's motivation for applying for the role, along with their reason for leaving their current or most recent role, should be explored at interview
- Staff working in EYFS or "later years" childcare must confirm that they are aware of their duty to disclose any information that would disqualify them from childcare and/or complete a staff disqualification declaration
- A satisfactory DBS enhanced certificate – the school must see the original certificate and not rely on a digital version
- For regulated activity, a check of the relevant barred list(s)
- Evidence should be provided that the candidate has the right to work in the UK
- For all staff in teaching work there must be a check against the TRA prohibited list and for staff appointed to a management position (and governors) a check must be made against the Section 128 list as per the Education & Skills Act 2008
- For staff that have lived or worked abroad in the last 10 years, additional overseas checks as required by the Home Office or considered relevant on a case-by-case basis, e.g., overseas police certificate, check with the relevant teacher regulation body (applicants who have taught in another country, overseas references
- All checks must be recorded in writing and logged in the SCR in accordance with the prescribed format and each staff file should also record the checks and evidence seen and recorded prior to or on appointment
- For staff living in school accommodation, schools must make the appropriate checks of other adults (family members) in that accommodation and provide suitable guidance which may include an explicit code of conduct
- Satisfactory completion of the school's probationary period (which should be considered an important part of the appointment process)
- Particular and explicit attention should be paid to training and guidance when employing a close family member – MIST's SSRA (2016) offered some general guidance on this issue that schools should take into account.



3. The induction process

Regardless of prior experience each school will provide an induction and training programme for newly appointed staff (and volunteers) that will, as a minimum:

- Provide training and guidance on school specific policy and procedures including the Child Protection policy and arrangements, online safety, whistleblowing, staff code of conduct/safe working practice and low-level concern reporting.
- Support appointees to ensure their best possible preparation for the role to which they have been appointed
- Provide opportunities for new staff to discuss any issues of concern and seek clarification of any matter requiring fuller explanation
- Enable the line manager to assess the need for and focus of a bespoke induction and support programme for the new employee
- Set out agreed procedures for mentoring and evaluation of progress required before any confirmation of a new employee's probationary period

4. Ongoing training

Even after the probationary period is complete, all staff should receive regular updates on safeguarding and child protection, reminders about protocols and procedures for early help, cause for concern, supporting children's mental health & wellbeing, online safety and whistleblowing.

5. Keeping Children Safe in Education

In addition to the procedures and steps summarised above each school must ensure that its employees and governors read the statutory guidance provided in *Keeping children safe in education* (and associated guidance e.g., "Working Together", DBS Code of Practice). This document provides essential information for HR managers and staff involved in any staff appointment in respect of matters including:

- Single Central Record
- Regulated Activity
- DBS and other vetting checks
- Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including agency staff) and volunteers
- Confidentiality
- Settlement agreements
- Record keeping
- Referrals to LA designated officers (LADO), the Disclosure & Barring Service and the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)
- Managing false, malicious, unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations

In addition, the Trust, school leaders and governing bodies will ensure that a range of mechanisms are in place to enable staff and governors to understand their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection

MIST requires that all schools review their safer recruitment policy annually, include a report on that review to governors and reports its findings in the MIST annual school report (ASR).



Fuller guidance and advice is available in:

[Keeping children safe in education 2021](#)

[Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, May 2019](#)

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