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Safer Recruitment Policy



Russell Street School children are **STARS** - Safe, Together, Achieve, Resilient, Special.
SAFE - 'We all have the right to feel safe all the time. Nothing is so awful or so small that we cannot talk about it.' (RSS iSafe Programme).

TOGETHER - Highly supportive relationships are established based on mutual respect. Children make a positive contribution to society. They understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens and respect the beliefs and values of others.

ACHIEVE - Children achieve the best possible outcomes through the delivery of an exciting, ambitious curriculum built around progressive new skills and knowledge acquisition. Children have a strong desire to learn more and acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

RESILIENT - Children demonstrate high levels of self-determination and control. Through a growth mindset attitude, children believe the impossible is possible.

SPECIAL - Children have access to a wide, rich set of experiences and have frequent opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Children feel an important sense of worth and belonging ensuring good mental health and well-being.

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Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education.

Russell Street School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, visitors and volunteers to share this commitment.

We recognise the value of, and seek to achieve a diverse workforce and are committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all staff at Russell Street School is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. This document provides a good practice framework that complies with the principles set down in the RSS Equal Information and Objectives.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- Attract the best possible applicants to vacancies
- Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people
- Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people

We aim:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability of the person
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any ground including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as outlined in the Equality Act 2010
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSE) and the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- To ensure that Russell Street School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks
- To ensure that all employment checks are recorded clearly on Russell Street School's electronic Single Central Register (SCR)

We are committed to using disciplinary procedures that deal effectively with adults who fail to comply with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and practices, including referring any allegation of abuse against an adult working with children to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of the allegation being made.

A referral will be made if an adult has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head teacher will undertake Safer Recruitment training and will:

- Ensure Russell Street School adheres to all safer-recruitment processes and will monitor regularly to ensure robust application of all processes and procedures
- Approve new/additional positions within Russell Street School against the strategic aims and financial budgets set
- Make the offer of appointment to successful candidates
- Involve a member of the Governing Board in the appointment of all senior positions
- Ensure that the school operates safe and fair recruitment and selection procedures which are regularly reviewed and up-dated to reflect any changes to legislation and statutory guidance
- Ensure that all appropriate checks have been carried out on staff, governors and volunteers in the school
- Promote the safety and well-being of children and young people at every stage of this process

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff

- Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy
- All employees involved in recruitment of staff will undertake Safer Recruitment training
- It is the responsibility of the School Business Manager, in conjunction with the Headteacher, to ensure all pre-employment checks are complete before employment begins and that they are recorded on the Single Central Record

Recruitment Process for Employees

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, Russell Street School will advertise all vacant posts and encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. Normally this will entail 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.

Any internal recruitment process will follow the procedures set out in this policy. All advertisements for posts, paid or unpaid, will include the following statement:

“Russell Street School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, visitors and volunteers to share this commitment. We are committed to safer recruitment practice and pre-employment checks will be undertaken before any appointment is confirmed. All vacancies are subject to enhanced DBS disclosures. We are an equal opportunities employer”.

Information for Applicants

All applicants will be provided with:

- A Job Description, outlining the duties of the post, and a Person Specification
- An Application Form (CVs will not be accepted)
- Information detailing that RSS Equality Information and Objectives as well as Safer Recruitment Policies are available on our school website
- An outline of terms of employment including salary or range
- The closing date for the receipt of applications

Prospective applicants must complete, in full, and return, a signed application form. Incomplete application forms may be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed forms has not passed.

Short Listing and Reference Requests

The selection panel will shortlist applicants against the Person Specification for the post. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants. The selection panel will agree the applicants to be invited to interview. Two references, one of which must be from the candidate's current/most recent employer, will be taken up before the selection interview stage (this will only apply to teaching vacancies as support staff employees may not permit references to be requested until a role has been offered) so that any discrepancies may be probed during this stage of the selection process.

Candidates are entitled to see and receive copies of their employment references and should request these from their referees. References will be sought directly from the referee and, where necessary, they will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges.

We will consider undertaking online searches, as necessary and explore any further potential concerns.

References will be sought for Volunteers and Governors as well as employees. Employment references should be sought for Governors and Volunteers rather than personal references. As an absolute last resort, a personal reference should be reinforced with a Risk Assessment.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges. If a candidate for a post working with children is not currently employed in a post working with children, wherever possible, a reference will be sought from the most recent employment in which the candidate has worked with children to confirm details of the candidate's employment and their reasons for leaving.

Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm, in writing:

- The referee's relationship to the candidate
- Details of the candidate's current post and salary
- The candidate's performance history and conduct
- Whether the candidate has been subject to capability procedures and the outcome of this
- Whether the candidate has been subject to disciplinary action relating to the safety and welfare of children, including where the sanction has expired, and the outcome of this
- Details of any substantiated allegations or concerns about the candidate relating to the safety and welfare of children

- Whether the referee has any reservations as to the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people, and if so, specific details of the concerns
- The candidate's suitability for the post with explicit reference to the job description and person specification.

For historical references which may be missing for five years or more, there should be a risk assessment in place signed by the Headteacher where two references are not evidenced. For less than five years, two references must be sought and evidenced. If the references are still not able to be obtained then evidence of several attempts made to gain them and a risk assessment must be filed in their personnel file. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. References will be verified, and any discrepancies or areas of potential concern will be discussed with the candidate at interview.

If the field of applicants is felt to be weak, the post may be re-advertised.

Selection Panels

Selection panels will comprise a minimum of two people (three for senior posts). Every selection panel will have at least one member who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training within the last five years.

Interviews

Before the interviews, the selection panel will agree on the interview format. Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates. Interviews will usually be face-to-face. Online interviews may be used in exceptional circumstances.

Candidates invited to interview will receive:

- A letter or email confirming the interview which asks whether any adjustments need to be made relating to any disabilities
- Details of the interview day
- Details of any tasks to be undertaken as part of the interview process
- The opportunity to discuss the post prior to the interview and the opportunity to visit the school.

The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each candidate meets the requirement of the Job Description and the Person Specification. The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will be asked. The selection process for every post will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of child safeguarding issues. This will include questions asked during the formal interview process.

Candidates will always be required:

- To explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment. The reasons for any gaps must be recorded on the interview form and if there are any concerns for gaps still occurring, follow up checks should be conducted ensuring these are fully explained and where required, evidenced
- To explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the selection panel
- To declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure
- To demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people
- To declare if they are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006

The above should be recorded within the job application form or on the interview form by at least one of the interview panel.

The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those protected, that the candidate has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment.

The recruitment documentation will be retained. Under the Data Protection Act 1998, applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. After 6 months, all information about unsuccessful candidates will be securely destroyed.

Pre-appointment checks

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

When appointing new staff, we will always:

- **Verify a candidate's identity from current photo ID (originals) and proof of address (originals)** except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available; the advice of the HR provider will be sought if this is the case. To comply with the Data Protection Law (including GDPR), we will not retain copies of DBS certificates, however, copies of other documents may be retained, e.g. passport, driving licence, right to work information, professional qualifications but these will be kept confidentially and securely within personnel files. Where possible, we will seek evidence from a passport. If using a birth certificate, any change of name should be supported with proof of name change for example a marriage certificate or change of name by deed poll. There must always be at least one source of ID used with photographic evidence.
- Obtain a certificate for an **enhanced DBS check with a barred list information** where the candidate will be engaging in regulated activity (activity is considered to be regulated if the visits occur more than 4 times in 30 days). The DBS certificate must be seen and checked, and then the name of who has checked and date checked the certificate included on the SCR. It is recommended copies are not kept, but if they are, they must not be kept for longer than six months. If no DBS is in place for any non-regulated individuals, they must be escorted at all times. **All employees, volunteers and Governors must have a DBS before starting their role.**
- A **barred list check** should be carried out alongside the DBS for all regulated roles.
- Where an employee or candidate subscribes to the update service we will carry out check on the secure online portal. Prior to carrying out the check, we **MUST** see the original certificate and a piece of photographic ID to confirm the identity.
- The compliancy guidelines state that DBS can be used from other schools if no break in service of more than 3 months has occurred; however this is not Russell Street School's policy and we require a new DBS for any new employee.
- We may conduct additional DBS checks, spot checks or in response to any concerns raised.
- The **Teacher Services (Teaching Regulation Agency)** will be used to check information about any teacher qualifications held, whether induction has been passed and to ensure the teacher is not subject to a Prohibition Order issued by the Secretary of State.
- A **prohibition check** should be completed for all other roles where the individual could be leading a class including Unqualified Teachers, HLTA, Cover Supervisors and Teaching Assistants.
- A **Section 128** check will be undertaken for those engaged in management roles using the Teacher Services (Teaching Regulation Agency) online service. Section 128 check is a compliancy requirement for all schools. Russell Street School must have a section 128 check completed. Section 128 checks should include those in management positions including Headteachers, School Business Managers, SLT members and Governors as a minimum.
- **Verify professional qualifications (original certificates)**, as appropriate. For teaching staff, evidence of QTS must be provided. Teacher Services (Teaching Regulation Agency) online service lists QTS dates/professional qualifications and whether induction has been passed and/ or the paper copy must be viewed.
- Ensure a **pecuniary interest** form is completed and signed annually.
- In line with KCSIE, **online searches** will be conducted on shortlisted candidates only and record this on the SCR, including the outcome of this and who conducted the check and date. This check will be carried out after the initial shortlisting stage of applications for all staff, governors, volunteers and anyone who will be unescorted on school premises. Candidates will be made aware during the application process that an internet search will be conducted.
- Carry out an **occupational health referral**. No details of medical information will be kept on the SCR.
- Verify the candidate's **right to work in the UK** (if there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then we will follow advice on the GOV.UK website).
- Make any further checks that we consider appropriate if the candidate (employee, volunteer or governor) has lived or worked outside the UK, they may need a local **Certificate of Good Conduct**. All applicants should complete an overseas declaration stating whether they have lived or worked overseas in one or more countries for more than three months since the age of 18 years.

Where it has not been possible to obtain a good certificate of conduct, it must be evidenced everything possible has been done to obtain one. The employee themselves is responsible for obtaining their certificate and will need to provide translation where required (we will ensure it has been accurately translated and translation has occurred by a validated source). Where employees have been travelling, we will evaluate this and either request a certificate of good conduct or produce a risk assessment.

o Individuals who have lived within the UK for **more than 10 years do not need to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct**. In lieu of this we will carry out a Risk Assessment and obtain additional assurances, possibly including an additional reference (employment or character).

o Individuals who have lived/worked outside the UK **within the last 10 years must obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct.**

- Any teacher who is recruited from outside the UK or has taught overseas (including individual EU countries) will be asked to provide **proof of their past conduct as a teacher** as issued by the professional regulating authority in the country in which they worked. The letter should confirm that the regulating authority have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on the individual, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach children. The letter will be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess their suitability. The candidate themselves is responsible for obtaining their letter and will need to provide translation where required (we will ensure it has been accurately translated and translation has occurred by a validated source).

If translation is required for any part of the safer-recruitment processes to be completed, it must be ensured that the translator is permitted and it is appropriate for them to conduct the translation.

If there are any disclosures on the DBS or any other concerns regarding completion of any of the checks, these must be highlighted to the Headteacher immediately. Processes and procedures must then be followed to ensure the person is safe to be on school premises, and evidence what steps are in place to eliminate any risks. HR advice may be sought. Entry to Russell Street School or appointment to a post may be denied if it is deemed the individual is unsafe or a risk to the pupils and staff. All explorations and agreements must be placed on file to demonstrate evidence of the procedures, processes and decisions made.

On line searches

In line with KCSIE, we will consider carrying out online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence. Online searches solely aim to help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, that the school may want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Online searches will be conducted on shortlisted candidates only, and only where the school considers this appropriate. Russell Street school will consider any potential risks of online searches, e.g. unlawful discrimination or invasion of privacy, and will ensure staff conducting online searches are clear on the purpose of the search. Shortlisted candidates will be made aware that online searches may be conducted as part of due diligence checks.

Online searches will only examine data that is publicly available. Staff will not 'follow' or submit a friend request to shortlisted candidates on social media platforms to access further details or information.

Online searches will be carried out by an individual who is independent of the recruitment process to minimise the risk of bias or discrimination and to ensure that only relevant information is considered. The person responsible for carrying out online searches will have due regard to Part three of KCSIE.

The online search process may include searching for the candidate by name via search engines and social media platforms.

When carrying out searches of shortlisted candidates' online presence, the school will look out for indicators of concern, such as:

- Inappropriate behaviour, jokes or language.
- Discriminatory comments.
- Inappropriate images.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Anything that suggests the candidate may not be suitable to work with children.
- Anything that could harm the reputation of the school.

Any concerns will be addressed during the interview process. The school will ensure that candidates are given an opportunity to discuss any concerns raised by the online search.

All checks will be:

- Documented and retained on the personnel file (A copy of the advert should also be retained)
- Recorded on the school's Single Central Record
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received

Offer of Employment by the Selection Panel

The offer of employment by the selection panel and acceptance by the candidate is binding on both parties, subject to satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks and satisfactory references. The successful candidate will be informed that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of these checks.

Personnel File and Single Central Record

Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of their employment with Russell Street School including:

Personnel file

- Application form – signed by the applicant and to include any previous surnames
- Interview notes – including explanation of any gaps in the employment history
- References – minimum of two employment references
- Proof of relevant academic qualifications
- Evidence of medical clearance from the Occupational Health Service
- Evidence of DBS clearance, Barred List (where applicable) and Teacher Prohibition checks
- Offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment
- Two emergency contact numbers for all staff (but must hold at least one emergency contact)
- Evidence of right to work and identity checks
- Overseas declaration (and Certificate of Good Conduct where applicable)
- Pre-employment online training certificates (see Induction Policy appendix A)

Single Central Record

We will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) of employment checks in accordance with DfE guidance. The SCR will be compliant and completed for each offer of employment and will include the following information:

- Full name of the new employee
- Employment start date from the first day the employee has access to the children
- Role offered
- Source of the proof of identify/right to work in the UK – passport is the preferred evidence
- Confirmation that the original DBS certificate has been checked from the candidate - DBS clearance number; date and who completed the check to be recorded
- Relevant qualifications with dates, these must be seen and included within the SCR where essential for the role. For example, QTS and number for all teaching staff
- Confirmation that 2 suitable references have been received
- Section 128 check for all those within SLT and management positions
- Teacher prohibition check for all staff ‘teaching’ – this includes anyone with a QTS qualification

We will ensure that teaching staff, support staff, administration staff, premises staff, governors, volunteers, agency staff, contractors, student teachers and additional instructors/ coaches are included within the SCR. Anyone included within the SCR that leaves, must be archived to ensure the SCR is current (to be moved to the leavers tab for up to seven years after they leave). All governors are subject to all checks as required by legislation (including a check with the Teacher Services (Teaching Regulation Agency) to check they are not subject to a section 128 direction and this information is included within the SCR.

We will ensure that our SCR is kept compliant and up-to-date in line with any legislation and requirements and kept securely, protected with passwords.

We will ensure we fulfil statutory requirements including those in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and amended changes February 2024 and Data Protection in Schools 2023, updated in 2024.

SCR Monitoring

To offer an extra layer of protection and due to the SCR being such a crucial document, SCR monitoring checks will be conducted by additional personnel – for example a school improvement partner/governor. Russell Street School will also conduct SCR monitoring and compliancy checks at least on an annual basis but more regularly if there are any outstanding actions identified in previous monitoring perusals, or new members of staff employed. Additionally, we will double check all members of staff are included within the SCR by comparing this to another source, for example, payroll to ensure no staff are accidentally missed.

Start of Employment and Induction

The pre-employment checks listed above must be completed before the employee starts work. Exceptions will only be made in circumstances where a risk assessment has been undertaken. Exceptions will never be made in the case of the Barred List and Teacher Prohibition checks. All new employees will be provided with an induction programme which will cover all relevant matters of school policy and must include demonstrating and understanding of the Behaviour, Attendance, Induction and Child Protection policies.

Adults working with children who are not employed directly by the school

Governors

All Russell Street School Governors will have the following relevant checks prior to commencing their role:

- Two employment references should be sought for Governors and Volunteers rather than personal references. As an absolute last resort, a personal reference should be reinforced with a Risk Assessment.
- Identity check
- Section 128
- Confirmation of DBS and Barring check
- Application form
- Childcare Disqualification form
- Overseas certificate of Good Conduct (if applicable)

All items will be retained and stored securely in a file in the school. Training records will be held electronically.

Induction for all governors includes:

- Before role commences:
 - o Online modules in
 - Prevent
 - FGM
 - Safeguarding basic awareness and governance responsibilities
 - o School safeguarding induction including awareness of the local context
- Within first 3 months of role:
 - o Governance role in monitoring and assurance of Safeguarding

All governors should also complete Induction Policy – appendices A & B (to be completed yearly)

Supply Staff

We will only use those agencies who operate a Safer Recruitment Policy and supply written confirmation that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed. We will carry out identity checks when the supply staff member arrives at school.

Peripatetic staff

For peripatetic teachers, evidence including photographic ID, DBS clearance and confirmation of all appropriate checks must be provided by the agency/firm (eg MK Music Services); this information must be included within the SCR.

Volunteers

We carry out DBS and pre-start vetting checks appropriate to the post and require regular volunteers to provide details of two referees. References are taken up, as detailed in this policy. Volunteers who help on an occasional basis (e.g. trips/PA events) are supervised, in accordance with legislation. We will undertake a risk assessment when deciding whether to obtain an enhanced DBS for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity. Details of these risk assessments will be recorded.

Contractors

We ensure that contractors, or any employee of the contractor working at the school, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, if any such check is required.

In exceptional circumstances where a DBS has not yet cleared and it poses significant disruption to the operational needs of the school, a risk assessment can be completed (only for contractors). Contractors without a DBS cannot commence work without a finalised and signed risk assessment. Contractors must provide a letter of assurance

confirming that all other relevant checks have been completed and a DBS has been applied for. Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been finalised will be supervised at all times.

If a contractor working at school is self-employed and will be in regulated activity, we will consider obtaining the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS on their own account.

We will check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

As stated previously, if there are any disclosures on the DBS, these must be highlighted to the Headteacher immediately and procedures must then be followed to ensure they are safe to be on school premises, and if so, evidence what steps are in place to eliminate any risks e.g. to be escorted at all times, checking with the HR provider for advice.

College/ school work placements

For any placements for students 16 or over, all appropriate checks, including an enhanced DBS, must be completed if they are ever unsupervised. For any students under 16 years, a risk assessment needs to occur and a thorough induction to ensure they understand the safeguarding and child protection and the expectations for conduct within the school.

Students on placement

When volunteers are working in school as part of a recognised training course (such as PGCE, NVQ etc.), references and completion of an application form will not be required. However, we will require proof of DBS enhanced clearance with barred list check and will carry out identity checks when the student arrives at school.

Students on work experience

Students on work experience will always be supervised and a signed risk assessment in place. If they are 16 years or older and work unsupervised, a DBS and all other appropriate checks must be completed (as stated above).

Disqualification

In line with the changes to the law, disqualification by association will only apply to domestic premises, therefore Russell Street School will no longer request information about the cautions or convictions of someone living or working in a household.

Under section 76(3) of the Childcare Act 2006, schools are prohibited from employing a disqualified person in connection with relevant childcare provision in the settings set out here: [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - statutory guidance Appendices \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#), unless the individual in question has been granted a waiver by Ofsted for the role they wish to undertake. An employer commits an offence if they contravene section 76(3), except if they prove that they did not know, and had no reasonable grounds for believing, that the person they employed was disqualified.

We will ensure that anyone we employ is made aware of the legislation, informing staff that when responding to questions about their criminal record, they do not need to provide details about any protected cautions or protected convictions.