



THOMSON HOUSE SCHOOL

Thomson House School Safer Recruitment Policy

Agreed by: Education Committee
Date: February 2024

Review Cycle: Annual
Next Review Date: February 2025

All the Thomson House School policies should be read in conjunction with the Equality Policy and the Child Protection Policy

If you require a copy of this document in large print, Braille or audio format, please contact the School Business Manager

1. Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the DfE Guidance contained in *'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruiting in Education' July 2012* and is in line with *'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023* and *'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2020*.

The school takes seriously its responsibility under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to work together with other agencies to ensure arrangements within the school are effective in protecting children.

This policy should also be read in conjunction with other policies relating to the welfare of pupils, in particular:

- Thomson House School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Thomson House School Equality Policy.
- Thomson House School Staff Handbook.

2. Purpose and Aims

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils. Thomson House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This is to be achieved through effective recruitment and retention of competent, motivated staff members who are suited to, and competent in, their roles.

The school recognises the value of and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce comprising different backgrounds, skills and abilities. As such, it is committed to a recruitment and selection process which is systematic, efficient, effective and equal. In doing so, it upholds its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants on ground of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the practice of safe recruitment of staff appointed to the school. It also sets out the minimum requirements to:

- attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- deter prospective applicants unsuitable for work with children;
- identify and reject applicants unsuitable for work with children.

3. Recruitment Procedures

The following procedures and practices are in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.

Stage 1: Advertising and Inviting Applications

All advertisements for all posts will clearly stipulate the stance adopted by the school by inclusion of the following statement: *'Thomson House School is committed to safeguarding children and young people'*.

Stage 2: *Application Pack*

Prospective applicants will be supplied with the following:

- Thomson House School Application Form (which will include the information listed in the DfE Guidance booklet on Safer Recruitment) which includes a statement that stipulates that Thomson House School is committed to safeguarding children and young people;
- a Job Description which will include references to the responsibility of all staff for safeguarding and to promote the welfare of students, as well as including suitability to work with children as an essential criterion;
- a Person Specification; these will include references to the responsibility of all staff for safeguarding and to promote the welfare of students, as well as including suitability to work with children as an essential criterion;
- a link to the school's website where further information about Thomson House School, including its values, can be accessed;
- confirmation that all post holders are subject to a satisfactory enhanced criminal record check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- application form used for all roles refer to our Safe Recruitment processes, for example in collecting references and in doing online and social media background checks.

Stage 3: *Applicant Selection / Short-Listing*

- Candidates for the post who are suited to the job description and person specification following analysis of their applications will be short-listed, following consultation between the Head Teacher (or a person to whom this has been delegated) and other staff involved in the interview process.
- School will endeavour to ensure that at least one representative involved in the shortlisting process has undertaken the Safer Recruitment accredited course training.
- In the event of large numbers applying for a particular post, the selection criteria will be further refined so as to select those who have scored most highly against the short-listing criteria. Telephone interviews may be used at the short-listing stage to establish suitability for interview but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face meeting as part of the final selection / interview process. Video / Skype interviews may be a substitute for a face-to-face meeting, only if the candidate is abroad or in times of national lockdown.

Stage 4: *Interview*

- Prior to embarking on the interview process and on point of arrival, candidates selected for interview will be asked to provide:
 - proof of identity;
 - actual certificates of qualification(s) - if relevant to position;
 - eligibility to live and work in the UK.
- The interview process will seek to assess each candidate in terms of fulfilling the requirements of the post and the questions and tasks will range to encompass knowledge, skills, competence and qualities needed for the particular post. We will also explore the candidate's understanding of safeguarding.
- The school will endeavour to ensure that at least one representative involved in the same shortlisting and interview process has undertaken the Safer Recruitment accredited course training.

- Candidates will always be required to:
 - explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment;
 - explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the interviewers;
 - Self-declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure;
 - demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

Stage 5: *References*

- References will be sought directly from the referees. References or testimonials provided by the candidate are never accepted. Open references, *'To Whom It May Concern'* and so on, will not be accepted if they fail to include date evidence or are without obvious authorisation.
- References will be sought through the use of a standard proforma to ensure key safeguarding information and questions are answered and commented on.
- In all cases of applicants being invited to interview, referees will be contacted by telephone or email in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges and retained on the personal file of the individual appointed.
- With cases of any anomalies or discrepancies in the application, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted in order to clarify the situation.

Stage 6: *Successful Candidate – Pre-Employment Checks*

The candidate will be required to provide the following prior to taking up the post (if they have not done so already at the interview):

- offers are subject to the receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- verification of the candidate's identity (best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate);
- a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check;
- if a candidate has been living abroad for more than 6 months in the last 5 years, a police check or Certificate of Good Conduct is needed to confirm that they have not obtained any caution/criminal record whilst living in that country
- verification of qualifications;
- verification of professional status where required, e.g. GTC registration, QTS status (unless properly exempted);
- (for teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period;
- evidence of the right to work within the UK.
- Satisfactory health and attendance records
- Online and Social Media check

4. **Staff Induction**

All staff that are new to the Thomson House School are required to undertake induction training, which will include reading, understanding and complying with the school's policies and specific induction in Safeguarding and Child Protection; Anti-Bullying; Whistle-Blowing; the staff Code of Conduct; the Staff Handbook; Fire procedures; Lock-Down procedures; and guidance on Safe Working practices.

Regular meetings will be held during the first twelve months of employment (probationary year) between the new staff and their appropriate line manager(s).

5. Leaving Employment of the School

There is a Statutory Requirement for the provision of the Protection of Children Act to be applied where employees work in the provision of care services to children.

Employees at the school who are dismissed, who resign in circumstances which may have led to dismissal, or where a disciplinary transfer has occurred on the grounds of misconduct which harmed or placed a child at risk of harm will be referred to the DBS and Children's Safeguarding Unit.

All members of staff leaving the school will undergo an exit interview with a member of the Governing Body.

6. Central Record of Recruitment and Vetting

The school will maintain a central record of recruitment and vetting checks, in line with the DfE requirements (see below). It will include:

- all staff who are employed to work at the school;
- all staff who are regularly employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly by the school or through an agency;
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children.

Any other people brought into the school to provide regular additional teaching or coaching instruction for students but who are not staff members, e.g. a specialist sports coach.

All existing staff DBS checks will be updated on a 5-yearly cycle and expiry will be reviewed through our online SCR monitoring.

From February 2021, new staff will be invited to join the DBS update service which updates automatically.

If a member of staff changes their name eg. gets married, a new DBS check will be required.

7. Rehabilitation of Offenders Disclosure

All posts within the Thomson House School are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Applicants will be required to declare, in writing to the Head Teacher, spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs; including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced DBS check. A previously issued DBS or DBS Certificate will only be accepted in certain restricted circumstances. Such disclosures will not be considered as part of the short-listing process. They will become part of the interview process in order to allow the candidate the opportunity to discuss the matter. Such information will not necessarily bar a candidate from employment. If the candidate is not successful, then the information will not be retained and destroyed after six months.

The Disclosure and Barring Service has published a Code of Practice with accompanying explanatory guide for information. Thomson House School is committed to ensuring that it meets the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service in relation to the processing, handling and security of Disclosure information.

8. Data Protection Issues

Employees are entitled to see and receive, if requested, copies of their employment references.

Further disclosed information will be treated in confidence and not used against applicants unfairly, including adherence to the current statutory code of practice.

9. Thomson House School will:

- Respond to changes in legislation required to ensure the safeguarding of children and review policy and practice in the light of developments, for instance Disclosure and Barring Service;
- In addition to the various staff records kept in school and in individual personnel files, a single central record (single central register) of recruitment and vetting checks is kept. This is kept up-to-date and retained on StaffSafe by the school's Office Manager.
- For the purposes of creating the record of checks for supply staff provided through a supply agency, the school will request written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed all relevant checks. Access to the check is only required where there is information contained in the DBS Disclosure. Information disclosed as part of a DBS Disclosure will be treated as confidential. Identity checks will be carried out by the school to confirm that the individual arriving is the individual that the agency has referred.
- For the purposes of creating the record of checks for peripatetic staff (for music, sports, etc.) the school will require all necessary check and DBS requirements are fulfilled.
- Where volunteers are likely to have regular, on-going and unsupervised access to students, the appropriate checks listed above will be undertaken.
- The school will ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure.

10. Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Governors' Education Committee and will be reviewed every year.

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