

SANCTON WOOD SCHOOL

Recruitment, Selection & Disclosure Policy & Procedure

September 2025

1 Introduction

Sancton Wood School is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its pupils and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The School is also committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment to all its members of staff.

The School recognises that, in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment. The aims of the School's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), **Keeping Children Safe in Education (1 September 2025) (KCSIE)**, Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006 (DUCA), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2015 updated on 1 April 2021) (the Prevent Duty Guidance), **Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 (statutory guidance)**, and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- to ensure that the School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training. For September 2025-26 the members of staff who have received the one day Safer Recruitment Consortium training are:

- Ellie Bullman (Financial Controller), Richard Settle (Principal), Kylie Hodges (Head of prep), Ed Batty (Head of Seniors), Debra King (Co-Curricular Vice Principal), Clara Furmaniak (Deputy Nursery Lead), Victoria Fonzo (Admissions).

The Cambridge Shared Services HR team have also received appropriate safer recruitment training.

-

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Advertising

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

1. Our school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
2. That safeguarding checks will be undertaken
3. The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children
4. 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

Application forms

Our application forms will:

5. 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)
6. Include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders

Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people and will:

7. Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
8. Explore all potential concerns

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

9. 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:
 - a. If they have a criminal history
 - b. Whether they are included on the barred list
 - c. Whether they are prohibited from teaching
 - d. Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
 - e. Any relevant overseas information
10. Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

•

Online Searches

We will also conduct online searches on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that we may carry out these checks as part of our due diligence process.

Our online search procedures will:

- Be conducted by the Cambridge shared service HR team
- Focus on publicly available information that may be relevant to safeguarding concerns
- Be documented appropriately with evidence retained where relevant
- Be conducted in a fair and proportionate manner
- Consider any information found in the context of the role and potential safeguarding implications
- Include searches of social media platforms, news articles, and other publicly accessible online content
- Be carried out at an appropriate stage in the recruitment process after shortlisting

Any concerns identified through online searches will be:

- Explored further with the candidate at interview
- Documented with clear rationale for decisions made
- Considered alongside all other recruitment information

Seeking references and checking employment history

We will obtain references before interview. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references we will:

11. Not accept open references
12. Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees
13. 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
14. Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
15. Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
16. Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
17. Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

•

Interview and selection

When interviewing candidates, we will:

18. Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
19. Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
20. Record all information considered and decisions made

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, as set out below.

New staff

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

21. Verify their identity
22. Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
23. Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
24. Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
25. Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
26. Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
27. Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
28. Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
 - a. For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants
 - b. For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach
29. **Check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state using the GOV.UK "Check if a person is prohibited from managing an independent school" service**

-

We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

1. Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
2. Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
3. Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

4. There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
5. An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
6. There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

7. We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
8. We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
9. We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
10. The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

-

11. An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
12. An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors. We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

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

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

13. Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
14. Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
15. Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
16. Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Governors

All governors [in academies: All trustees, local governors and members] will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

-

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

The chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

17. **A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008) using the GOV.UK "Check if a person is prohibited from managing an independent school" service.** [Section 128 checks are only required for local governors if they have retained or been delegated any management responsibilities.]
18. Identity
19. Right to work in the UK
20. Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

All governors will also have the following checks:

21. Identity
22. Right to work in the UK
23. Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Alternative Provision Settings

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we will:

- **Obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform**
- **Ensure written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform us of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e., staff changes), so that we can check these arrangements too**
- **Maintain knowledge of where our pupils are throughout school hours (i.e., the address where they are being educated)**
- **Review alternative provision placements at least half-termly to ensure children are attending, their needs are met and the setting is safe, with the potential that the placement is ended if any concerns are not addressed**

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

-

Pupils staying with host families

Where the school makes arrangements for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

Additional Safeguarding Considerations

Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding

We recognise that online harms now explicitly include misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories. All staff involved in recruitment will be aware of these evolving digital risks when conducting online searches and assessing candidates' suitability.

Support for Children with Specific Needs

We will ensure that staff recruited are appropriately trained and equipped to support:

- Children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or gender questioning (noting that revised guidance on gender questioning children is expected to be published)
- Children with autism (using current terminology aligned with the SEND Code of Practice)
- Children in kinship care (recognising the extended non-statutory responsibilities of Virtual School Heads)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

All staff will receive appropriate training on supporting children's mental health and wellbeing as part of our comprehensive safeguarding approach, recognising the strong links between mental health and safeguarding.

Prohibition and Barring Checks - Updated Procedures

For teaching positions, we will use the GOV.UK "Check a teacher's record" service to verify:

- Teacher qualification status
- Any prohibition orders
- Any restrictions or sanctions

For management positions, we will use the GOV.UK "Check if a person is prohibited from managing an independent school" service for Section 128 checks.

•

Record Keeping and Data Protection

We will maintain comprehensive records in accordance with:

- KCSIE 2025 requirements
- The Information Commissioner's Employment Practices Code
- DfE Data Protection guidance for schools
- Independent School Standards Regulations 2014

All safeguarding records, including recruitment decisions, will be stored securely and retained in accordance with statutory requirements and our data retention policy.

Policy Review Date: September 2026

Next Review: This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant changes to relevant legislation or guidance

Policy Owner: Richard Settle (Principal)

Approved by: [Governing Body]



Sancton Wood School

2 St. Paul's Rd, Cambridge CB1 2EZ

01223 471703

office.prep@sanctonwood.co.uk

www.sanctonwood.co.uk