



Policy Document: SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Schools Lead Member of Staff: HEADTEACHER

Lead Governors (monitoring): FULL GOVERNORS

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Safeguarding Governor signature:

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Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy

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Governors will review this policy regularly and may amend and adapt it in accordance with any new legislation or guidance.

This policy was considered and adopted by the Governors in line with their overall duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as set out in the DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2022.

Parents will be issued with a hard copy of this policy on request. This policy will also be made available to parents via the school website.

CFS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and requires all staff to act in the best interests of our young people at all times.

1. Introduction

CFS recognises its duty under the Education Act 2002 to make arrangements to ensure that functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and complies with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014.

CFS follows the guidance laid out in 'Keeping children safe in education' (Sep 2022) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018). We also follow HM Government advice 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2015) and the Local Children Safeguarding Board's Child Protection Policies, Procedures and Guidance. It is the intention of the procedures within this policy to ensure that robust recruitment and vetting procedures exist to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

CFS also has comprehensive policies and procedures on all other aspects of safeguarding and child protection made clear to staff, young people, parents/carers and referring authorities. All staff are aware of, and follow in practice, the organisation's policy to ensure that the appropriate action is taken immediately where it is believed a young person may be at risk or it is alleged that a young person is suspected of being abused.

2. The Advertising of Posts

The occurrence of a vacancy or creation of a new post will normally result in an advertisement being placed within the setting, on the website, through CST and within local churches.

All advertisements will make clear that the position is one that gives an opportunity to work as part of a faith venture within a church community setting. They will set out the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken. Other information will include the post title, whether it is a full or part-time and temporary or permanent position, the safeguarding responsibilities of the post, whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

3. Visits to CFS school

Visits by potential employees are actively encouraged and form a valuable part of our recruitment and selection process. Candidates are given an in-depth tour and accurate information relevant to the position. The member of staff hosting the visit will always be someone who has the necessary experience and expertise to answer any queries raised.

4. Candidate Application Pack

All prospective employees are sent an application pack, which includes the Application Form, request for a covering letter, CV and church elders/pastor's reference, Job Description (where possible), General Specifications for employment at CFS, 'Basis of faith' and 'Prague declaration'.

If possible, the job description and specification will include the following:

- The skills, Abilities, Experience, Attitude & Behaviours, required for the post.
- The safeguarding requirements ie. to what extent the role involves contact with children and whether they will be engaging in regulated activity

All applicants are required to complete the Application Form in full and return it in accordance with any deadline specified. CFS will not accept curriculum vitae in place of an application form. However, applicants may attach relevant supplementary information and/or documents.

5. Equality and Diversity

CFS strives to operate a policy of equality and diversity and all applications will be considered on the basis of the knowledge, understanding, skills, qualifications and experience required to undertake the roles and responsibilities of the post.

6. Short-listing

All applications are scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment.

Incomplete applications are not accepted and may be rejected without further consideration. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny are noted and may be considered when considering whether to short-list the applicant.

Short-listing for interview is normally conducted by members of the interview panel and is based on the information presented in the completed application form, as measured against the criteria detailed in a Person Specification. As part of our due diligence checks, an online search of short-listed candidates will be carried out by a member of staff who has received safer recruitment training and who will not otherwise be involved in the recruitment process. The online search will focus only on gaining insight into the candidate's suitability to work with children only.

Shortlisted candidates will only be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children and be asked to sign this at the interview. This will be retained as necessary. Shortlisted candidates are clearly advised that they do not need to disclose any cautions or convictions that are considered 'protected'.

7. Interview

Candidates are normally interviewed by a panel whose number and experience vary according to the nature and seniority of the position advertised. The Chair of every appointment panel will have successfully completed safer recruitment training.

Interviews will normally follow a pre-determined format with the panel agreeing a set of specific questions they will ask all candidates in order to establish their suitability for the position. A candidate's response to a question will determine whether and how that is followed up. All responses are recorded.

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also explore the following:

- ☐ verification of the candidate's identity, qualifications and experience;
- ☐ verification of the candidate's registration with a professional body;
- ☐ gaps in the candidate's employment history; and
- ☐ concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee.

The panel will also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything, in light of the fact that an application for a criminal record check (DBS check), barred list check and prohibition check (as appropriate) will be required. Candidates will also be given the opportunity at interview to provide accurate context and the circumstances surrounding any disclosed criminal record, and/or information identified during an online search.

After each interview, the candidates are measured against the relevant Person Specification. The panel will deliberate whenever there is more than one suitable candidate for a particular position.

8. Pre-appointment checks

All posts are subject to a fully completed application form, satisfactory employment references, medical clearance, evidence of the applicant's right to work in the UK and evidence of the required qualifications and any further pre-employment checks set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, including an Enhanced DBS check, a Barred List check for those working in Regulated Activity, a prohibition check for those in teaching positions, overseas criminal checks, European Economic Area teacher sanction checks etc.

The verbal offer of employment and the initial offer letter must be conditional on all the required checks being completed. Candidates should be advised not to resign until their post is confirmed and all relevant checks have been completed.

The school will keep a record of the pre-employment checks carried out on the successful candidate and these will be included within the school SCR. Evidence of the checks undertaken (where appropriate to do so) will be kept in the individual's personnel file.

All offers of employment are made in writing, giving details of salary, start date, and duration of the probationary period. Successful candidates are asked to reply in writing, stating their acceptance of the post.

Any failure to disclose information or the provision of incorrect information may result in an offer of appointment being withdrawn or in disciplinary action being taken leading to summary dismissal at a later date and possible referral to the police.

When appointing new staff or volunteers, CFS must:

- ☐ verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID – either passport or driving license with photograph - and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available;
- ☐ fill in Part One of the Employment Self Declaration and Disclosure Form – authorised employing officer to complete this;
- ☐ obtain a certificate for a suitable DBS check - for most appointments, an enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be appropriate;
- ☐ check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State; or has any sanctions imposed by the GTCE (prior to its abolition in 2012)
- ☐ obtain a completed criminal record self-disclosure from the candidate which will be checked against information from the Disclosure & Barring Service before the appointment is confirmed.
- ☐ check if the candidate will be working with pupils under the age of eight years and if so, obtain confirmation from them that they are not disqualified from doing so.
- ☐ check that a candidate to be employed in a management position is not subject to a section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State;
- ☐ verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- ☐ verify the person's right to work in the UK, by following Home Office guidance. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then CFS will follow advice on the GOV.UK website;
- ☐ check if a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK' post-Brexit and if so, obtain a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked;
- ☐ if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school consider appropriate. Advice on the criminal record information which may be obtained from overseas police forces, published by the Home Office, is on GOV.UK; and

- ☐ Verify professional / relevant qualifications, as appropriate.

Applicants / volunteers do not start work until all necessary checks have been completed.

9. References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will always be obtained, scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed. They will always be requested directly from the referee apart from church leaders who are well known to the school and CFS will not usually accept open references, for example in the form of 'to whom it may concern' testimonials.

Prior to interview CFS will seek at least two references on both internal and external candidates, including the current or most recent employer/line manager. One of the references should be from the last time the applicant worked with children. Referees are asked to comment on substantiated allegations and the candidate's suitability to work with children. Additional referees may include previous employers or professionals who have known the candidate personally for at least two years.

Every request will ask:

- ☐ about the referee's relationship with the candidate;
- ☐ whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question, and for specific comments about the applicant's suitability for the post, and how s/he has demonstrated that s/he meets the person specification;
- ☐ whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and, if not, for specific details of the referee's concerns.

In addition to the above, requests addressed to a candidate's current or previous employer in work carried out with children will also seek:

- ☐ confirmation of details of the applicant's current post, salary
- ☐ specific verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct;
- ☐ details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to, particularly those related to the safety and welfare of children or young people;
- ☐ details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people.

All referees will be reminded that:

- ☐ they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission;
- ☐ relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.

On receipt, references will be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee may be contacted to validate the reference and provide further clarification as appropriate: for example, if the answers are vague. They will also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the candidate.

10. Employment of ex-offenders

The suitability for employment of a person with a criminal record will vary, depending on the nature of the job and the details and circumstances of any convictions.

A candidate's criminal record should be assessed in relation to the tasks they will be required to perform and the circumstances in which the work is to be carried out. The following points should be considered when deciding on the relevance of offences to particular posts:

- ☐ Does the post involve one-to-one contact with children?

- ❑ What level of monitoring and supervision will the individual receive?
- ❑ Does the post involve any direct responsibility for finance or items of value?
- ❑ Does the post involve direct contact with the public?
- ❑ Will the nature of the job present any opportunities for the individual to reoffend at work?

In some cases, the relationship between the offence and the post will be clear enough for the organisation to decide easily on the suitability of the applicant for the job. For shortlisted applicants who have met the requirements of the personal specification and then disclose a criminal record that is not related directly to the post, the organisation will discuss the relevance of each offence with the applicant.

The following issues will need to be taken into account:

- ❑ the seriousness of the offence and its relevance to the safety of other employees, young people or property
- ❑ the length of time since the offence occurred
- ❑ any relevant information offered by the candidate about the circumstances which led to the offence being committed, for example, the influence of domestic or financial difficulties
- ❑ whether the offence was a one-off, or part of a history of offending
- ❑ whether the individual's circumstances have changed since the offence was committed, making reoffending less likely
- ❑ whether the offence has been decriminalised by Parliament
- ❑ the country in which the offence was committed. Some activities are offences in Scotland and not in England and Wales, and vice versa
- ❑ the degree of remorse, or otherwise, expressed by the individual and their motivation to change.

All discussions and deliberations will be recorded in accordance with recruitment procedures.

11. DBS Update Service

All employees are obliged to join the DBS Update Service when applying for a new DBS check; and give consent for the organisation to carry out instant checks online as and when appropriate.

The DBS update service requires paid employees to update annually at a small cost, which can be claimed back from school. Volunteers will automatically be renewed free of charge. Annual checks will be made for all member of staff on the update service to make sure that they have renewed successfully. Any member of staff not on the update system will be asked to apply for a new DBS every five years for any member staff who remains employed within the organisation. However, where CFS has concerns about an existing staff member's suitability to work with children, they will carry out all relevant checks as if the person were a new member of staff.

12. Single Central Record

In line with the requirements of the relevant legislation covering independent schools, CFS keeps a single central record which covers the following people:

- ❑ all staff (including supply staff) who work at the school;
- ❑ all others who work in regular contact with children in the school, including volunteers; and
- ❑ all members of the proprietor body.

CFS maintains and safeguards all records relating the recruitment and appointment of staff in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The details in staff files should cross match exactly with the Single Central Record.

13. Regulating and vetting visitors

(including: agency and third-party staff, contractors, volunteers, governors and proprietors)

Agency and third-party staff

A written notification will be gained from any agency, or third-party organisation confirming that they have carried out the checks on an individual who will be working at the school, that the school would otherwise perform. Where the agency or organisation has obtained an enhanced DBS certificate before the person is due to begin work at the school, which has disclosed any matter or information, or any information was provided to the employment business, the school will obtain a copy of the certificate from the agency. Where the position requires a children's barred list check, this will also be obtained by the agency or third party by obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information, prior to appointing the individual. The school will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

Where the school uses contractors to provide services, they will set out the safeguarding requirement in the contract between the organisation and the school. School will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity relating to children will require an enhanced DBS check including children's barred list information. For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity relating to children, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check not including the children's barred list information will be required. School will check the identity of contractors on arrival at the school.

If an individual working at a school is self-employed, the school 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.

School will not request DBS checks or barred list checks, or ask to see existing DBS certificates, for visitors such as children's relatives or other visitors attending a sports day. The Head Teacher / Principal will use their professional judgement about the need to escort or supervise such visitors.

For visitors who are there in a professional capacity the school will check ID and be assured that the visitor has had the appropriate DBS check (or the visitor's employers have confirmed that their staff have appropriate checks).

Volunteers

Under no circumstances will a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. For each volunteer the school will undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required. The risk assessment will consider:

- the nature of the work with children, especially if it will constitute regulated activity, including the level of supervision
- what the school knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability; and
- whether the role is eligible for a DBS check and, if it is, what level is appropriate. Details of the risk assessment will be recorded
- School will obtain an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information, for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity with children ie. where they are

unsupervised and teach or look after children regularly, or provide personal care on a one-off basis in school.

Governors and Proprietors

All members of the governing body will be required to have an enhanced DBS check. Governors do not need a children's barred list check unless they also engage in regulated activity. School will also carry out a Section 128 check

Before an individual becomes the chair of Governors, the Secretary of State will:

- Carry out an enhanced DBS check; and where such a check is made, obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (as appropriate, this may or may not include children's barred list information)
- Confirm the individual's identity; and
- If the individual lives or has lived outside of the UK, where applying for an enhanced check is insufficient, such other checks as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

14. Staff Training

All staff involved in the recruitment and selection process will receive training appropriate to their role and responsibilities. At least one person on every appointment panel must have successfully completed safer recruitment training.

15. Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 'Recruitment and Selection Policy' is the head teacher.

The designated member of staff is also responsible for ensuring that all young people, staff, parents/carers and placing local authorities are aware of our policy. A digital copy is posted on our website www.cfschool.org.uk.

This policy document will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, more frequently in response to any significant new developments in national, local and organisational policy, guidance and practice.

The proprietors will also undertake an annual review of the organisation's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and ensure that all duties have been discharged in accordance with current legislation, regulations and statutory guidance.

Appendix

Safer Recruitment Procedure

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1. The Advertising of Posts

An advertisement should be placed within the setting, on the website, through CST and within local churches.

All advertisements should make clear that the position is one that gives an opportunity to work as part of a faith venture within a church community setting. They should set out the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and reference the need for the successful applicant to undertake an appropriate DBS disclosure via the DBS. Other information should include the post title, whether it is a full or part-time and temporary or permanent position.

2. Visits to CFS school

All potential candidates should contact the school for a preliminary conversation with the Assistant Head of operations, after which they will be invited to a vision tour of the school prior to application.

Candidates will be given an in-depth tour and accurate information relevant to the position.

3. Candidate Application Pack

All prospective employees should be sent an application pack which includes:

- Application Form
- Job Description (where possible)
- General Specifications for employment at CFS
- Basis of faith
- Prague declaration
- Church elders/pastors reference form

The pack should also request the following to be sent back with the completed application form:

- a covering letter
- CV
- Completed Church elders/pastor's reference form
- Copies of qualification certificates

All applicants should be required to complete the Application Form in full and return it in accordance with any deadline specified. A CV should not be accepted in place of an application form.

4. Short-listing

All applications should be scrutinised to ensure

- They are fully and properly completed
- the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies
- any gaps in employment are identified

Short listed candidates invited to interview should be asked to bring to the interview

- A completed Employment Self - declaration and Disclosure form in a sealed envelope (to be signed at interview)
- Proof of their right to work in the UK e.g. valid British passport, National Insurance number shown on a wage slip (not just the card), valid work permit
- Three identification documents (preferably a birth certificate and passport or Photo driving licence and one other which verifies their present address).

5. References

If possible, three references should be obtained before interview

School should:

- Not accept open references e.g., to whom it may concern

- Not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- Ensure one reference is from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (e.g., Head Teacher)
- Obtain verification of the most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer
- Always verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- Ensure digital references originate from a legitimate source
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post
- Ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed

6. Interview

Interviews should be conducted by a panel whose number and experience vary according to the nature and seniority of the position advertised. The Chair of every appointment panel should have successfully completed safer recruitment training.

The panel should agree prior to interview, on a set of specific questions they will ask all candidates in order to establish their suitability for the position.

These should include:

Finding out what attracted the candidate to the post applied for and their motivation for working with children

Exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role

Probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this

The interviews should be used to explore any potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing include:

- Implication that adults and children are equal
- Lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
- Inappropriate idealisation for children
- Inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children
- Indications of negative safeguarding behaviours
- **A candidate's response should be recorded.**

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case with the Chair of Governors

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel should also check the following:

- candidate's identity
- qualifications and experience;
- candidate's registration with a professional body; (e.g., Teacher reference number)
- gaps in the candidate's employment history

- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee.
- Medical clearance - Relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role can be asked at interview

The panel should also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything, in light of the fact that an application for a criminal record check (DBS check), barred list check and prohibition check (as appropriate) will be required.

After each interview, the candidates should be measured against the relevant Person Specification. The panel should be deliberate whenever there is more than one suitable candidate for a particular position. All information considered in decision making should be clearly recorded along with decision made.

7. Pre-appointment vetting checks, regulated activity and recording information (to be in place before a candidate is employed)

The verbal offer of employment and the initial offer letter must be conditional on all the required checks being completed. Candidates should be advised not to resign until their post is confirmed and all relevant checks have been completed.

The school should keep a record of the pre-employment checks carried out on the successful candidate and these should be included within the school SCR. Evidence of the checks undertaken (where appropriate to do so) should be kept in the individual's personnel file.

All offers of employment should be made in writing, giving details of salary, start date, and duration of the probationary period. Successful candidates should be asked to reply in writing, stating their acceptance of the post.

Before appointing a new member of staff or volunteer the following must be done:

- **candidate's identity verified**, preferably from birth certificate, current photographic ID – either passport or driving license with photograph - and proof of address except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available;
- **certificate of suitable DBS check obtained** - for most appointments, an enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be appropriate;
- **Prohibition Orders against teachers check obtained.** Check on the Teaching Regulations Agency's Employer Access Service that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State; or has any sanctions imposed by the GTCE (prior to its abolition in 2012)
- **completed criminal record self-disclosure from the candidate obtained**, which should be checked against information from the Disclosure & Barring Service before the appointment is confirmed. (Part One of the Employment Self-Declaration and Disclosure Form should be completed by school)
- **completed EYFS Disqualification Declaration form from the candidate obtained.** If the candidate will be working with pupils under the age of eight years
- **section 128 direction made by the Secretary of State; check obtained.** If the candidate will be employed in a management position (this includes Governors/Directors)
- **candidate's mental and physical fitness** to carry out their work responsibilities verified.
- **completed Health Questionnaire**
- **candidates right to work in the UK verified.** This could be their National Insurance number shown on a wage slip or other government letter e.g., HMRC/DWP or Work Permit number. If

there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then advice on the GOV.UK website should be followed;

- **Further checks for anyone who has lived or worked outside the UK, in the last 10 years.**
- **Verify professional qualifications, as appropriate**

8. DBS Update Service

All employees should be advised to join the DBS Update Service when applying for a new DBS check; and give consent for instant checks online as and when appropriate.

9. Single Central Record

In line with the requirements of the relevant legislation covering independent schools, a single central record will be kept which covers the following people:

- all staff (including supply staff) who work at the school
- all others who work in regular contact with children in the school, including volunteers
- all members of the governing body.