SHREWSBURY HOUSE SCHOOL TRUST

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Policy owner:	Bursar
Approved by:	Executive Head
Date of last review:	September 2025
Next review:	September 2026

Statement of Intent

Each school within the Trust is committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment for all staff and it is recognised that in order to achieve these aims it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre to support this commitment.

The aims of the Trust's recruitment and selection procedure are as follows:

- To ensure that the best possible people 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 and not unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic (age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or religious belief, marriage & civil partnership, union membership/non-membership) or as defined in the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant and current employment legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DFE) *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*, The Regulatory Requirements (as amended), The Protection of Freedoms Act, The Education Act 2002 (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 as amended and the Code of Practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- To ensure that the Trust Management, supported by the HR Department, meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Recruitment Process

<u>Advertisements</u>

Advertisements will contain a recruitment and selection statement which includes the individual School's safeguarding commitment and the level of DBS disclosure required.

The position will be advertised internally and externally as necessary, using the School website and other appropriate websites.

Applications

The Trust will only accept applications from candidates who have completed the application form in full, which includes their complete employment history and their suitability for the role; any gaps in employment will be explored with the candidate. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline has not passed. Curriculum Vitaes will not be accepted as a substitution for a completed application form. Suitable candidates will be invited to interview (and each school reserves the right to conduct preliminary interviews as well). The successful candidate will be required to sign their application form if it has been received in electronic format.

All employees within each individual school will have responsibility for the safeguarding of children. All staff must be aware of their duty to promote the welfare of children and young people.

It is important that applicants provide the interviewing panel with legally accurate answers. Upfront disclosure of a criminal record may not prevent a candidate from being appointed as the nature, circumstances and background of the offence will be considered, i.e. how long ago and at what age it was committed together with any other relevant factors. If the answer is yes to the question of disclosable offences, the guidance on the application form should be followed on how to disclose this confidentially.

Guidance and criteria on filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) website. The Childcare Act 2006 lists the offences that would prevent a candidate from working with children. See Annex A – Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders.

In all cases, the successful applicant will be required to complete a DBS Disclosure form.

Failure to declare any convictions (that are not subject to DBS filtering) may result in the non-confirmation of appointment or summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light subsequently, and a possible referral to the police and/or the DBS or when applicable the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

References are requested for each candidate and will ask their current or most recent employer about disciplinary offences including those relating to children, and whether the candidate has been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns, and if so the outcome. More information can be found in the 'reference' section of this policy.

Shortlisting and Interviewing

The recruiting manager will shortlist applications according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. Those applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete and return a 'Shortlisted Candidates - Suitability to work with children: self-declaration' form.

Prior to interview, HR will prepare an application pack which will normally include:

- Job Description / Person Specification;
- Recruitment form with suggested interview questions and space to take notes;
- Individual's Application Form.

Applicants who are invited to an interview, will be advised to bring the following documentation:

- Original documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications referred to in their application form or that are relevant to the post, where applicable; if the successful candidate cannot provide originals or certified copies of certificates, the candidate must obtain written confirmation from the awarding body.
- Proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK if applicable.

An on-line search is undertaken on short-listed candidates and information relating to any findings may be explored with the applicant at interview.

The Interview

The formal interview panel will consist of at least two members of staff applying the same criteria and usually chaired by the Executive Head/individual Head or other designated member of management. The interview panel will include at least one member of staff who has successfully completed the 'Safer Recruitment' training. All staff must be aware of the individual School's Safeguarding Policies.

The interviewers involved will be required to state any prior personal relationship or knowledge of any of the candidates and a judgement will be made by the Chair as to whether or not an interviewer should withdraw from the panel. Should the Chair have a conflict of interest, other senior managers on the panel will decide whether the Chair should withdraw.

All questions will be relevant to the job and include safeguarding questions regarding the candidate's suitability to work with children. In no case will assumptions be made about a person's personal and domestic circumstances or plans. During the interview it may be identified that the requirements of the job may affect the candidate's personal life, e.g. unsociable hours or extensive travel; these should be discussed objectively.

The candidate's previous employment history and experience will be checked by the interview panel for any gaps which will be followed up at interview.

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview should inform the individual School of any necessary reasonable adjustments of arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

Conditional Offers of Appointment

All verbal conditional offers of appointment will be confirmed in writing by HR.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

1. Receipt of at least two written satisfactory references, one of which should address the suitability to work with children, if these have not already been received.
2. Verification of identity.
3. An enhanced DBS disclosure processed as a new DBS or verified via the Update Service.
4. A check of the DBS Children's Barred List for those in regulated activity.
5. For a candidate to be employed in teaching work, a check that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State.

6. For senior members of staff, including Heads of Department or other management positions, a section 128 of the above will be checked.
7. Receipt of child protection training with the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
8. Verification of medical fitness for the post.
9. Verification of original qualifications, where applicable.
10. A Certificate of Good Conduct or a police clearance certificate if the candidate has lived and worked overseas in the last ten years, unless this has already been established by a school in the UK since the candidate returned from overseas; evidence of this information will be requested.
11. Evidence of the right to work in the UK.
12. Agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the individual School's standard terms and conditions of employment.

Social media checks will be carried where a conditional offer of employment is made.

Pre-Employment Checks

Medical Fitness

The Trust is required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at each individual School, after an offer of employment has been made, but before the appointment can be confirmed. This is by way of a medical fitness self-declaration form.

It is the Trust's practice that all applicants to whom an offer of employment is made must complete a medical questionnaire. This information will be reviewed against the job description and the person specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e. proposed timetable, co-curricular activities, and layout of the individual site, etc.

The Trust is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. If the individual School is considering withdrawing a job offer on medical grounds, then the applicant may be consulted further/ medical evidence may be sought and then the individual School may consider reasonable adjustments and suitable alternative employment prior to withdrawing the offer.

The individual School may seek a further medical opinion from a specialist or request that the applicant undertakes a full medical assessment. The Trust will bear the cost of any requested medical examinations/reports.

References

Human Resources, on behalf of the individual school, will seek references. In accordance with KCSIE, whenever possible, references will be sought prior to interview. All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references, which are considered satisfactory by HR and the individual School. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer.

Where there is no current employer, verification of the most recent period of employment and reasons for leaving should be obtained, effectively recognising that not all employers will provide a substantive reference. If the current/most recent employer does/did not involve working with children, then the second referee should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with

children. If not, character references will be sought which will include a specific requirement to confirm the candidate's suitability to work with children.

References ideally should be from a senior person with appropriate authority i.e. someone who would be in a position to be aware of issues and not usually just a colleague. All references will be verified with a confirmatory phone call.

Neither referee should be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend. All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. All referees will be sent a copy of the job description and person specification for the role which the applicant has applied for. Electronic references will be verified to ensure they originate from a legitimate source and any information provided directly by the candidate will be verified.

It is permissible for verbal references to be sought in circumstances where time is an issue for instance; however, these references must be recorded in writing and returned to HR prior to the commencement of employment.

If an applicant does not wish HR to take up references on behalf of the individual school in advance of interview he/she should notify them at the time of applying, preferably by annotating the application form in the reference section.

Referees from current or previous employers will also be requested to provide the following information:

- Applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance, sickness* and disciplinary record.
- Whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired, except where the outcome of the allegation was that it was false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious.
- Whether any allegations or concerns 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, except for those which were found to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious.

*only to be answered in reference requests sent out after the offer of employment has been made.

Human Resources will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on testimonials provided by the applicant or open references/testimonials.

Any discrepancies or inconsistencies found on the application form in comparison with the references will be taken up with the relevant referee and may be discussed with the candidate before any appointment is confirmed. If an offer has already been made, the candidate may be contacted for further discussion and, if as a result of that discussion, the offer may be withdrawn.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

This procedure has been written in accordance with each individual School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Any new member of staff will be given the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for the relevant school on or before taking up the position and from time to time will be asked to sign a declaration that they have received, read and agreed to any updates.

Supervision Prior to Receipt of an Enhanced DBS Disclosure

If there is a delay in receiving a DBS disclosure the Executive Head/Head/Bursar has the discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending receipt of the disclosure and following completion of a risk assessment by the appropriate line management; the conditions of this are detailed on the supervision authority form.

This will only be authorised if all other checks, including a check of the Children's Barred List, have been completed and once appropriate supervision has been identified.

A new member of staff will be informed of supervision if their DBS has not been received, or the original certificate has not been seen by HR or nominated person at the individual School.

Previous Convictions

If a DBS Certificate reveals any conviction(s), the person concerned may be invited to attend an interview with the Executive Head/individual Head to discuss the conviction(s) and circumstances. Please see Annex A. The Executive Head/individual Head or his/her nominated delegate will undertake a detailed risk assessment and complete the necessary paperwork, to determine if the person can start work within the individual School.

If the Executive Head's nominated delegate completes the risk assessment, it must be approved and signed off by the Executive Head/individual Head.

Failure to reveal information directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of any offer of employment as previously detailed.

Other Personnel Working at the Schools

Peripatetic Staff, e.g. Visiting Music Tutors

The Trust requires that all regulatory checks and enhanced DBS requirements must be satisfactorily completed for all the peripatetic staff and the safeguarding checks are to be undertaken as if they were employees. DBS checks will be re-checked approximately every 3 years.

Contractors and Agency Staff

Contractors engaged by the individual Schools who are in regulated activity (as defined in KCSIE) must complete the same checks for their employees that the Trust is required to complete for its staff. Before employees of the contractor can commence work at any of the Schools, the Trust HR department requires written confirmation for each individual that these checks have been completed. This is either by completion of a checklist confirming the date each check was carried out or by an assurance letter, expressly confirming that each required check was completed before the individual is on site at SHS. SHST does not accept statements such as 'we check all staff'.

Agencies who supply staff to any of the Schools must also complete the pre-employment checks, which the Trust would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the Trust requires written confirmation that these checks have been completed, and the dates on which they were carried out, before an individual can commence work.

Human Resources will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors and agencies. The required original identity documents must be supplied on or before the first day at any of the Schools. The contractor/agency will be required to confirm in writing that all regulatory checks have been made, and the dates on which they were carried out, before staff are supplied to work at any of the Schools. Furthermore, if a disclosure certificate shows information, the certificate must be provided to HR in order that the suitability of the agency staff member to work at the individual School can be considered.

Volunteers

The arrangements for volunteers will vary by individual and activity. Human Resources in conjunction with the individual School must assess whether the individual will be in regulated activity. In situations where volunteers are supervised, they do not fall within the definition of regulated activity so a barred list check would not be required. This is the case no matter how frequently or regularly an individual volunteers.

Work Experience volunteers under 18 years old will only be able to volunteer during holiday periods.

Supervision should be by a person who is in regulated activity; the supervision should be regular and day to day and must be reasonable to ensure the protection of children. An unsupervised volunteer whose presence is frequent and regular, is in regulated activity and an enhanced DBS certificate and barred list check must be undertaken.

Human Resources on behalf of the individual School may undertake the following additional discretionary checks on volunteers:

- References.
- A check may be made to ensure others in the School community know of no concerns and can make a positive recommendation.
- An informal interview may be conducted to consider the person's aptitude and suitability.
- A check will be made against the Children's Barred List if they are in regulated activity.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced disclosure will be obtained if they are in regulated activity.

In other circumstances, e.g. where a volunteer's role will be 'one off' i.e. accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing, helping at a concert or School fete, the above measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of children.

Alternative Provision

SHST understands the need to seek assurance from any alternative provision, e.g. a co-curricular club organised by a third party off-site, that all the required checks have been undertaken by them. Although this information is not recorded on the SCR, copies of the correspondence confirming this are retained by HR.

Single Central Register (SCR)

It is a DfE requirement that schools retain a Single Central Register of all appointments that fall within regulated activity. Details of all required safeguarding checks are entered onto this record which is inspected from time to time by the Independent Schools Inspectorate. Each school has an individual SCR.

For agencies and contractors, or any organisation that is required to provide a safeguarding form to the School i.e. where the checks have not been completed directly by the School and they do not show a disclosure, 'no information shown' must be annotated in the comments column on the SCR. If the DBS contains a disclosure, the agency/contractor will be asked to provide the original DBS certificate in order for the Executive Head/individual Head to conduct a risk assessment.

Human Resources regularly reviews new appointments and will discuss any queries relating to new personnel during the recruitment process, including records made on the SCR, with appropriate senior managers. The Safeguarding Governor undertakes termly visits and checks the SCR and samples a random selection of personnel files of new appointments. The Heads also conduct a termly review of the sections of the SCR pertaining to their school.

Record Retention

If the applicant is appointed, HR will retain any relevant information provided on their application form, together with any attachments, on their personnel file in line with the staff Privacy Policy.

The Trust will retain all recruitment paperwork on applicants for a six-month period, after which time the completed application forms and notes for unsuccessful applicants will be shredded. The six-month retention period will allow the Trust to deal with any data access requests or recruitment complaints.

The Trust reserves the right to keep certain recruitment data for the maximum period of one year for future vacancy purposes.

Applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulations 2018, (UK GDPR). The School has a calendar month from the receipt of the request in accordance with UK GDPR 2018 to provide the information.

The School complies with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice, a copy of which may be accessed here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice

Induction and Probation

An induction programme for all newly appointed staff and volunteers is set out to provide training and information about the individual School's policies and procedures and to confirm the conduct expected of staff within the Trust and the individual School. The purpose of induction and probation is to:

- Provide training and information about the organisation's policies and procedures.
- Support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged.
- Confirm the conduct expected of staff within the establishment and provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities.

- Enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset or from the interview and address them immediately.

Child Protection training appropriate to the role is also provided to all new staff as a mandatory element of the induction and probation programme for those working with children. This is undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The content and nature of the induction and probation process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, and the individual School's contractual guidelines, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction and probation programme should include information about:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. Child Protection (including online safety), Internet and Social Media safety, any local child protection and safeguarding procedures.
- Health & Safety.
- Data protection.
- Other relevant personnel procedures e.g. Staff Code of Conduct, Whistleblowing, disciplinary, capability, family policies, etc.

Leavers

Exit interviews are carried out (where appropriate). In some situations, an employee may not want a face to face exit interview. In this situation he/she may be asked to complete a leavers' questionnaire. A Leavers' Checklist form is available from HR which is to be used to ensure that all School property is returned upon leaving.

Shrewsbury House School Trust will report to the relevant authority, within one month of the individual leaving the School, any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. Further details are available in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

ANNEX A – POLICY ON THE RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS

The Trust will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The Trust makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record it will not automatically bar him/her from employment with any of the individual Schools. Instead each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or the DBS.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the Trust to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the Trust to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence.

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the Trust. The Trust will report the matter to the police, the DBS and any other regulatory bodies that need to be informed, if:

- the Trust or individual School receives an application from a disqualified person;
- is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or,
- the School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- Whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question.
- The seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed.
- The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred.
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.
- If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the Trust's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of serious criminal offences such as: murder, serious sexual offences, serious acts of violence, serious drug related offences, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the Trusts's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the Trust's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink-driving.