

Bedales School Safer Recruitment Policy

Implementation date: November 2014
Date/term of last review: September 2024

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|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Author | Director of HR |
| Review body (individual or group) | Designated Safeguarding Lead |
| Approval Body | The Bursar |
| ISI Regulatory Paragraph Number | 103 |
| Next Review Period | September 2025 |

Tick relevant box(es) ✓ how this Policy should appear:

| | | |
|---------------|----------|---|
| ISI Documents | | ✓ |
| Website | Upload | |
| | Signpost | ✓ |
| Internal only | | |
| Parent Portal | | |
| For Students | | |

Safer Recruitment Policy

Introduction

Bedales School is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its students 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 for all its members of staff. The school recognises that, to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment.

Bedales recognises that the safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education and, in line with legislative requirements, the school takes its duty of care for all students very seriously.

To help safeguard and promote the welfare of all its students, the school is committed to a thorough and consistently applied Safer Recruitment Policy and, as an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

No employee can start work in any post until **ALL** pre-employment checks relevant to their post have been completed.

Aims & objectives

The aim of the Safer Recruitment policy, and guiding documents that sit alongside it, is to help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse students or are otherwise unsuited to working with them.

The policy and guiding documents ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including but not limited to Keeping Children Safe in Education legislation KCSIE 2024, [Disqualification under the Childcare Act \(DUCA\)](#), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 [Prevent](#) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) ([Code of Practice for Disclosure and Barring Service](#))

The school has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best candidate for the job. The recruitment and selection process will ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience, and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy. Those involved in the recruitment and selection of staff must have received appropriate training as detailed in the Safeguarding Training Policy and at least one member of every interview panel should be accredited in Safer Recruitment Training.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

Bedales will follow this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at the school.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, Bedales will advertise vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible. Normally this entails an external advertisement. However, where a vacancy needs to be filled urgently or there are other constraints such as financial constraints, the school may decide not to advertise the role.

Any advertisement will make clear the Bedales commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, that safeguarding checks will be undertaken, and that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended).

Bedales will not normally follow an external recruitment process in the case of redeployment, where employees are under notice of redundancy and the vacancy is suitable alternative work, the employee is disabled or for health reasons requires alternative employment. Employees on temporary contracts can be made permanent without their job being advertised. The Head may designate some posts as suitable development opportunities for existing employees. These posts will not be advertised externally.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with data protection legislation.

Application Forms

Bedales uses its own application form and all external applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their personal details, academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). CV's alone will not be accepted in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education rules.

All applicants will be made aware that it is an offence to apply for the role if they are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children or to provide false information and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police and other professional regulatory bodies (e.g. the Teaching Regulation Authority).

All internal applicants will be required to apply to recruitment@bedales.org.uk via an Internal Application Form available via the intranet [Job Vacancies \(sharepoint.com\)](#). The school will use a combination of the employee's existing application form on file (used to engage into the employee's original post with the school), Professional Development Reviews (PD) and current skills and experience to assess if the individual meets the essential criteria for the post. Only employees who meet the essential criteria will be invited to an interview.

Job description & Personal Specifications

A job description will be drawn up for the role and finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role including safeguarding responsibilities as required by KCSIE.

The person specification informs the selection decision and will set out the skills, experience, abilities, and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be undertaken by at least two people from the recruitment panel. Candidates will be assessed against the person specification.

As part of the shortlisting process Bedales will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on the

shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at an interview. Bedales will inform shortlisted candidates that online searches will be done as part of due diligence checks.

Self-declaration criminal record form

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete and sign a self-declaration form of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. It will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended) since it involves working with, or having access to children, and so applicants are required to declare:

All unspent conditional cautions or convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

All adult cautions (simple or conditional) or spent convictions that are not 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended)

The amendments to the Exceptions Order provide that certain 'spent' convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account.

If the form only has an electronic signature, a written hard signature will be required at interview.

Social Media Checks

As part of the shortlisting process the school will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates in line with KCSIE requirements. This is to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at an interview. Shortlisted candidates are informed as part of the privacy notice on the application form that online searches will be done as part of due diligence checks in line with data protection legislation and UK GDPR and asked to sign to provide their permission for such checks to be carried out.

Interviews

Assessment will be by face-to-face interview, and the same panel will see all the applicants for the vacant position. Where suitable, the school may carry out a preliminary interview by video conference. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification, as well as their motivation in working with children in line with KCSIE requirements. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps that have been identified to ensure that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information regarding past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions (as declared on the self-declaration criminal record form) will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address, right to work in the UK and qualifications. Only original documents will be accepted, photocopies will be taken, and original documents returned. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed following the end of the recruitment programme.

Offer of Appointment and New Employee Process

All information considered in the decision-making process is clearly recorded as part of the onboarding process, in addition to the decisions made.

As all roles in the school are categorised as regulated in line with KCSIE legislation, the appointment of all new employees is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory DBS Certificate, references, medical checks, copies of

qualification, evidence of the right to work in the UK and proof of identity. A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with the Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate

All staff at Bedales require an enhanced DBS Certificate and therefore a DBS Certificate must be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee. Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff including an enhanced DBS certificate including barred list information, even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, the school must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

Portability of DBS Certificates Checks

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £13 per annum (as at the time of publication), which is payable by the applicant.

Copies of DBS Checks

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore employees/applicants should bring their Certificate to the HR team within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity.

Dealing with convictions

Bedales operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions.

Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (as amended) and:

- the nature, seriousness, and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the Bursar. A decision as to employment will be made following this meeting.

Proof of professional status

Candidates must provide proof of their qualifications by production of original documentation.

Medical Fitness

Anyone appointed to a post involving regular contact with children must possess the appropriate level of physical and mental fitness before any appointment offer is confirmed. All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. The school is an equal opportunities employer and adjustments to facilitate an applicant's ability to discharge their role will always be discussed and considered based on medical and other relevant information in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

Right to Work Checks

All short-listed external candidates must also bring to the interview a valid form of evidence which confirms their right to work in the UK. Valid forms of evidence can be found in the Home Office 'Right to Work Checklist':

(Right to work checklist (publishing.service.gov.uk)).

The school will check this evidence in accordance with the Home Office 'Code of Practice on preventing illegal working: Civil penalty scheme for employers: 1 July 2021' (Code of practice on preventing illegal working (publishing.service.gov.uk)).

References

References will only be sought for shortlisted applicants after an offer has been made subject to contract and references. The only exception will be for teachers where references will be sought for shortlisted candidates before they are invited to an assessment. Two professional/character references must be provided. These will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective information to support appointment decisions. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone or face-to-face will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference. All job offers, including any verbal offers, must be conditional on receipt of two satisfactory references.

All references received from a school for an external candidate must be countersigned by the Head of that school for teaching posts. Bedales does not accept open references, testimonials, or references from relatives.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school's policies and procedures and make clear the expectations and the Code of Conduct which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff

In addition to the various staff records kept in the school and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks must be kept in accordance with the Department of Education requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the HR Team with DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Safeguarding Lead Governor oversight. The Single Central Register (SCR) will contain details of the following:

All employees who are employed to work at the School;

- all supply staff 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. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff, and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for students but who are not staff members e.g., sports coaches etc.

Personnel Records

All information retained on employees is digitally recorded securely by the HR team. Information will be processed, handled, and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

On-going Employment

Bedales recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will therefore provide on-going training and support for all staff, as identified through the annual review/appraisal process.

Leaving Employment at the School

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there may be occasions when allegations of abuse against children and young people are raised. In cases relating to the behaviour of an employee (these behaviours are within the context of four categories of abuse (i.e., physical, sexual, and emotional and neglect) the School's Disciplinary Policy will apply. For employees for whom a low level of concern is identified the school will follow its Low-Level Concerns Policy.

In cases of dismissal (or resignation) due to serious safeguarding concerns, Bedales will inform the DBS (for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required) and the Local Authority Designated Officer of the circumstances why the employee is leaving the school's employment. We also consider whether a referral should also be made to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) with respect to teaching staff.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the school.

Updates to this Policy

| Page | Paragraph | Update |
|------|-----------|---|
| 3 | 7 | Intranet link to Internal Application Form added and recruitment email |
| 3 | 7 | PRAD updated to reflect new terminology of Professional Development |
| 3 | 8 | Following paragraph added The school reserves the right to appoint internal staff directly into fixed term posts without the need to follow a recruitment process. If a fixed term arrangement becomes a permanent vacancy the school standard recruitment procedure will be followed with all staff, including the staff member who has held the fixed term position, required to submit an application / expression of interest. |
| 5 | 4 | Post replaced with original vacancy |
| All | | Shortlisted candidates replaced with short-listed external candidates where clarification is required for the recruitment process between external and internal candidates at formal interview |
| 7 | 1 | (External candidates only) added to the end of each check that only applies to external candidates |
| 7 | All | References – external candidate added to clarify where criteria only apply to external candidates |
| 8 | 1 | Interview assessment form replaced with candidate assessment form |
| 8 | 5 | External candidate added to the following sentence. All references received from a school must be countersigned by the Head of that school for teaching posts. |
| 20 | 11 | HR Manager replaced with Head of HR |
| All | | Full review by Director of HR in line with changes to KCSIE September 2023 |
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