



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

Safer Recruitment Policy

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Full Name	Position	Signature	Date	Review Cycle
Sandeep Athwal	Director		V1 – 01/01/2024 V2 - 02/01/2025 V3 – 15/06/2026	Annual



Mission Statement

SOC Independent Schools is a safe, well-ordered and caring environment for learning. It delivers high-quality education to all its students and supports them to develop their individual potential for growth, self-worth and self-control.

High-quality outstanding teaching, and clear and consistent guidance and support, facilitates students in succeeding in education. Our broad and balanced academic and vocational curriculum will provide students with access to a range of qualifications as well as educational and social experiences, which will address their learning and emotional needs (including SEND and Mental Health support). Our purpose is to support every student to develop their true potential, make positive contributions to their families and find fulfilment in employment.

Values

1. Alternative Provision doesn't mean a dumping ground...it's mainstream with the reasonable adjustments to succeed
2. High standards and high expectations are incredibly important and are the cornerstones to a successful school
3. SOC Independent Schools should become the go-to place for educators from across the country to see best practice
4. Good simply isn't good enough
5. Learning is about a journey and there is more than one way to get to the destination
6. Qualifications, manners, respect and opportunity should be the foundations for students that need a second chance.

School Ethos

High standards – students are pushed to achieve beyond their potential, and staff work to ensure everything that we do is better than people expect.

Daring to Dream – students at SOC Independent Schools may have been in an educational setting where they lacked aspiration to be successful, at SOC Independent Schools we challenge students to reach their potential and go on to further education and employment.

Traditional Values – some things often get forgotten in education, at SOC Independent Schools we pride ourselves on mutual respect, good manners, making a positive contribution, supporting one another and an orderly, and litter free environment.

Success – can come in many virtues, at SOC Independent Schools we celebrate the small steps every day and tell students when they are doing well. We ensure that students can have a successful future.

Personalised Support - all students at SOC Independent Schools have a tutor who guides them, sets them bespoke targets and supports them in making social and academic progress.



1.0 Introduction

1.1 SOC Independent Schools is committed to providing the highest level of education and care to its pupils and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

1.2 SOC Independent Schools recognises that the safe recruitment of its staff in school is essential to safeguard the children in attendance.

1.3 Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues relating to child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the process and for all people being recruited.

1.4 This policy is NOT a Recruitment and Selection Guide and deals only with safer recruitment. The content of this policy is in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 The aims of this safer recruitment policy are as follows:

- to help deter, reject or identify people who are unsuitable to work with pupils by having appropriate selection and appointment procedures
- to ensure that the best staff are recruited based on their suitability, merits and abilities as measured against the job description and person specification
- to ensure that no applicant is discriminated against on any grounds as per the Equality Act 2010
- to ensure compliance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education
- to ensure compliance with current employment legislation
- 2.2 It is recommended that this guidance is used in conjunction with the advice and support of your HR provider.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 It is the responsibility of the Director and Education Quality Manager as well as all other staff involved in recruitment to:

- ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures
- ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school
- to monitor contractors and agencies compliance with this policy

4.0 Recruitment and Selection Procedure

4.1 Selection Panel

4.1.1 Any person with a personal or pecuniary interest in the appointment of a particular applicant 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.

4.1.2 At least one member of the selection panel will have completed Safer Recruitment Training¹

4.2 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

4.2.1 Every job description and person specification will make reference to the post holder's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

4.2.2 The person specification will include specific reference to suitability to work with children.

4.3 Advertisements

4.3.1 Adverts for all posts will include the school's commitment to Safeguarding and the fact the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act i.e.;

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This position is subject to appropriate vetting procedures including a criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly CRB) which will require you to disclose details of all unspent and unfiltered spent reprimands, formal warnings, cautions and convictions in your application form.

4.4 Application Forms

4.4.1 All prospective applicants must complete an electronic form (indeed). 4.4.2 CV's or general letters of application will be accepted.

4.4.3 Application forms and supporting information will be scrutinised fully and explored with the applicant where necessary to resolve any discrepancies or anomalies.

4.4.4 As part of the application process (usually on the application form) applicants will be asked to complete a criminal record self-disclosure.

4.4.5 All applicants will also be provided with the Safer Recruitment Policy.

4.5 References

4.5.1 References will always be obtained from the candidate's current employer. Where a candidate is not currently employed, verification of their most recent period of employment and reasons for leaving will be obtained from the school, college, or organisation at which they were last employed.

4.5.2 References will include specific questions relating to the role applied for, a candidate's suitability to work with children, any substantiated allegations relating to children and/or any disciplinary action taken in relation to their work or contact with children because of which penalties or sanctions have either expired or remain in force.

4.5.3 References will also be used to confirm details provided by the applicant in the application form (such as the experience and qualifications claimed by the applicant).

4.5.4 References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee – they will not be accepted directly from the applicant.

4.5.5 Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or email in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

4.5.6 Open references or testimonials will not be accepted, and only written references will be considered.

4.5.7 Where electronic references are received, we will ensure that they originate from a legitimate source.

4.5.8 References will be sought on all shortlisted candidates, including internal ones, and where possible will be obtained before interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.

Where it is not possible to obtain references prior to interview because of delay on the part of the referee a reference will be received and scrutinised prior to confirmation of appointment.

4.5.9 In all instances where an applicant currently works in a school or educational setting, a reference will always be sought from the Headteacher of that establishment.

4.5.10 If a candidate for a position is not currently employed in a school, but has been in their past, we will check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

4.5.11 A minimum of two references will be received and scrutinised.

4.5.12 Information provided by the Director or Education Quality Manager for an internal candidate will be considered like a reference for an external candidate.

4.5.13 If a panel member knows something factual (i.e. that can be supported by evidence) about a potential candidate that other members may not know, the information will be shared so that the panel itself can decide if it is relevant.

4.5.14 Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post (including information obtained from the DfE Sign-in Teacher Services checks referred to below).

4.6 Interviews

4.6.1 Interviews will be required for all shortlisted applicants and will always be conducted face to face. Telephone interviews may be used at the shortlisting stage but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview.

4.6.2 Candidates will always be required to;

- Explain any gaps in employment
- Explain any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the selection panel
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure
- Demonstrate their attitudes, motives and values for working with children and young people, and their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people
- Bring with them evidence of their identity (photographic), address and qualifications. Original documents only will be accepted, and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant's documents (copies) will be destroyed.

5.0 Making the Offer of Appointment

5.1 An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, is conditional upon satisfactory completion of the following pre- employment checks.

The Appointing Officer will:

- verify a candidate's identity, following the enhanced DBS identity checking guidelines <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-identity-checking-guidelines/id-checking-guidelines-for-dbs-check-applications>
- obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity;
- obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available;
- check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher, or to carry out 'teaching' work, is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the DfE Sign-in Teacher Services website (formerly called 'Employer Access Online');
- check that a candidate to be employed in a management position within an academy is not prohibited from doing so (a section 128 direction), using the DfE Sign-in Teacher Services website. Individuals taking part in 'management' may include individuals who are members of proprietor bodies (including governors if the governing body is the proprietor body for the school), and such staff positions as follows: Director, Education Quality Manager, any teaching positions on the senior leadership team, and any teaching positions which carry a department headship. Whether other individuals such as teachers with additional responsibilities could be prohibited from 'taking part in

management' depends on the facts of each case;

- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities – PEAQ or Assessment of Fitness to Work;
- conduct other checks related to the requirements of the role e.g. driving licence or valid insurance;
- verify the person's right to work in the UK;
- if a person has lived, or worked outside the UK make any further
- appropriate checks (see para 16 below);
- verify professional qualifications, by requesting certificates of evidence as appropriate;
- for staff who work in childcare provision or who are directly concerned with the management of such provision we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 by requiring signature on a declaration form.
- Will ensure that the appropriate Online Checks have been completed by The Mercian Trust to ensure there is a full picture of the candidate prior to them commencing employment and their online activity poses no risk.

5.2 DBS Certificate

5.2.1 A DBS certificate will be obtained from the candidate before or as soon as practicable after appointment. Alternatively, if the applicant has subscribed to it and gives permission, we may undertake an online update check through the DBS Update Service.

Before using the Update Service, we will:

- a. obtain consent from the applicant to do so;
- b. confirms the certificate matches the individual's identity; and
- c. examines the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, e.g. enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.

5.2.2 Where we allow an individual to start work before a DBS is available, we will always ensure that the individual is appropriately always supervised and that all other checks, including a separate barred list check, have been completed.

6.0 Agency and Third-Party Staff

6.1 We will obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organisation we use that the organisation has carried out the checks on an individual who will be working at the school that we would otherwise perform. This will include, as necessary, a barred list check prior to appointing that individual. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

7.0 Volunteers

7.1 We will prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required; and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised. Under no circumstances will we allow a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained to be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

7.2 If we appoint volunteers, we will adopt the same recruitment measures as we would for paid staff. Where the volunteering role will be a one-off such as accompanying teachers and pupils on a day outing or helping at a school fete, such measures would be unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised in charge of children.

7.3 We will undertake a risk assessment and use our professional judgement and experience when deciding whether to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity. In doing so we will consider:

- the nature of the work with children;
- what we know 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 suitability;
- whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check;
- Details of the risk assessment will be recorded.

8 Contractors

8.0 We 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 will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including barred list information) will be required.

8.1 Under no circumstances will a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

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

9.0 Visitors

9.0 We will check identification of professional visitors upon their arrival to school and ensure that they sign in and out of the building.

9.1 We will use our professional judgement about the need to escort or supervise visitors on school sites.

10.0 Induction

10.1 All new employees will be given an induction program which will include systems within the school which support safeguarding.

This includes (but is not limited to):

- the safeguarding policy;
- the behaviour policy
- the staff handbook (sometimes called a code of conduct)
- the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies).

10.2 All staff members will also receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

10.3 All staff will be required as part of their induction to read and understand at least part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 statutory guidance.

14.0 Single Central Record

14.1 A single centralised record is kept in accordance with the DfE requirements. This is kept up to date by the Education Quality Manager and is retained securely by the school. It contains the details of the following:

- all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school
- regular volunteers who are engaged in regulated activity
- all members of the proprietor body, i.e. members and trustees of the academy trust.

14.2 The information recorded on these individuals is whether or not the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which the checks were completed:

- an identity checks;
- a barred list check;
- an Enhanced DBS check;
- a prohibition from teaching check;
- a S128 check (where applicable - see above);
- further checks on people living or working outside the UK;
- a check of professional qualifications, where required;
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom;
- childcare disqualification declaration, where relevant

14.3 For supply staff, we will also include written confirmation (and the date) that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates.

15.0 Record Retention

15.1 Copies of DBS certificates will not be retained as this is not a requirement of the duty to maintain the Single Central Record.

15.2 A copy of the other documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept for the personnel file.

15.3 Interview notes on unsuccessful applicants will be retained for a period of 6 months after which they will be destroyed.

16.0 Applications from Overseas Applicants

16.1 Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools or colleges. In addition, schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. The Home Office guidance on criminal records checks for overseas applicants can be found on GOV.UK.

16.2 These further checks should include a check for information about any teacher sanction or restriction that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed, using the DfE Teacher Services system. Although restrictions imposed by another EEA regulating authority do not prevent a person from taking up teaching positions in England, schools should consider the circumstances that led to the restriction or sanction being imposed when considering a candidate's suitability for employment.

17.0 A Wider Culture of Vigilance

17.1 SOC Independent Schools is committed to providing the highest level of education and care to its pupils and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is recognized that safer recruitment does not end at appointment. Our school is committed to creating a 'safer culture' and will ensure the following:

- That there are clear procedures in place to monitor, support and review new entrants to the organisation
- That there are clear procedures for reporting concerns
- That any employee who reports a concern is supported in doing so and there is a clear commitment to taking appropriate action.

Appendix: Safer Recruitment Procedure – Must be available in every interview process.

Safer Recruitment Procedure

At least one member of any interview panel must have completed Safer Recruitment Training.

1. Ensure all e-mailed applications are signed.
2. Ensure at least two questions/scenarios for safeguarding are covered in the process.
3. Check and ask about any gaps in employment.
4. Check and ask about any frequent changes to employment.
5. All members of the panel should be aware about motivations for working with children.
6. Share the statement below to the candidates.

If you are appointed, you will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. If you have any offences or other matters that might be relevant to the position you must declare this. All information disclosed will be held in the strictest confidence and only used to determine if the disclosure impacts your role. Failure to reveal any previous unspent convictions or other relevant information could lead to a withdrawal of an offer of employment or termination of employment regardless of the conviction to the nature of employment.

“Recruitment of Ex-Offenders” policy adopted by School of Coding has been issued application information. Further copies are available on request.

When closing the interview process ask the following questions:

- ☐ Do you have any questions for us?
- ☐ Are you still a firm candidate for the post?
- ☐ What number is best to call you on to let you know the outcome?
- ☐ Any job offer will be subject to satisfactory references and DBS checks.
- ☐ Do you think the process has been fair?

Any notes/activities/observations should be returned to the school office and placed in the recruitment folder following the interview.

Examples of safeguarding questions:

1. What do you understand by the term “safeguarding”?
2. What makes a school a safe and caring place?
3. What would you do if you were concerned about a colleague’s behaviour towards children?