

Safer Recruitment Policy

To Include Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Academic Year: 2026 / 2027

Date of review: August 2026

Date of publication: September 2026

Date of next review: August 2027

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PARK SCHOOL

Aim of policy:

The aim of this policy is to ensure that **Park School** recruits, appoints and retains staff of the highest calibre while maintaining the strongest possible commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

The School recognises that effective safer recruitment practices are a critical component of safeguarding and that robust recruitment procedures help prevent unsuitable individuals from gaining access to pupils. This policy establishes a comprehensive framework for recruitment, vetting, induction, monitoring and record keeping in accordance with current statutory requirements, in addition to ongoing safeguarding considerations.

Related Guidance and School Policies

This policy outlines the schools approach to a safer recruitment process and checks but is not exhaustive in its scope and should be used in conjunction with the following policies, statutory guidance and advice:

Policies:

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Filtering & Monitoring Policy*
- *Artificial Intelligence Policy*
- *Behaviour & Sanction Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Relationships, Sex & Health Education (RHSE) Policy*
- *Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education (PSHEE) Policy*
- *Early Years Framework*

Statutory & Regulatory Guidance:

- *Data Protection Act 2018*
- *UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*
- *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Working with Children and Young People in Education Settings — February 2022*
- *Education Act 2002.*
- *Children Act 1989.*
- *Children Act 2004.*
- *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.*
- *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.*
- *Childcare Act 2006.*
- *Equality Act 2010.*

- *UK GDPR.*
- *Data Protection Act 2018.*
- *Prevent Duty Guidance.*
- *Disclosure and Barring Service guidance.*
- *Home Office Right to Work requirements.*
- *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended 2013 and 2020) — filtering rules for what must be disclosed*
- *The Independent School Standards: Guidance for Independent Schools — April 2026, Part 4 (suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors)*
- *Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 — right to work checks*

Policy Statement

Park School is committed to providing a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and visitors. The School recognises that safeguarding begins with recruitment and therefore adopts rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures designed to deter, identify and reject unsuitable applicants.

The School seeks to:

- Recruit staff based on merit, ability, qualifications, experience and suitability for the role.
- Ensure all applicants are treated fairly, consistently and without discrimination.
- Maintain a culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Comply fully with statutory safeguarding and employment requirements.
- Ensure robust oversight of recruitment, vetting and suitability checks.
- Protect pupils from harm through effective safer recruitment practices.

The School is an equal opportunities employer and will not unlawfully discriminate on grounds protected by law.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all individuals working at or on behalf of **Park School**, including:

- Teaching staff.
- Support and administrative staff.
- Supply staff.
- Peripatetic teachers.
- Activity leaders.
- Volunteers.

- Contractors where appropriate.
- Governors.
- Proprietors.
- Agency and third-party staff.

It applies across all phases of the School, including EYFS, Preparatory School and Upper School, and covers all pupils including Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Recruitment Principles

The School recognises that safer recruitment is a process rather than a single event. Safeguarding considerations are embedded throughout every stage of recruitment, from advertisement and application through to appointment and induction.

All recruitment activity will:

- Promote the School's commitment to safeguarding.
- Assess suitability to work with children.
- Scrutinise employment and education history.
- Verify qualifications and professional status.
- Identify safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure appropriate pre-employment checks are completed before employment commences.

The School will not use artificial intelligence as an automated decision-making tool at any stage of recruitment, selection or promotion.

Job Advertisements and Recruitment Information

All recruitment materials will clearly communicate the School's commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment.

Job advertisements, recruitment packs and application materials will:

- Include a safeguarding statement.
- Explain that safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- State that online searches may be conducted on shortlisted candidates.
- Identify whether the role requires an enhanced DBS check and barred list check.
- Refer applicants to safeguarding policies where appropriate.

Applicants will receive:

- A job description.
- A person specification.
- Information about safeguarding expectations.
- Details of the recruitment process.

Application Process

Applicants must complete the School's application form in full. Curriculum vitae will not be accepted as a substitute for a completed application form.

Application forms will require information relating to:

- Educational history.
- Employment history.
- Professional qualifications.
- References.
- Suitability to work with children.
- Relevant criminal record disclosures where appropriate.
- Online profiles and publicly available professional accounts where relevant to online due diligence.

Any gaps, discrepancies or anomalies in employment, training or educational history will be explored and satisfactorily explained before an appointment is confirmed.

Shortlisting and Online Searches

Shortlisting will normally be undertaken by at least two members of staff.

As required by KCSIE 2026, the School will consider carrying out online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence process. The purpose of these searches is to identify publicly available information that may relate to safeguarding, professional conduct or suitability to work with children.

Online searches:

- Will only review publicly available information.
- Will not require applicants to disclose passwords.
- Will not involve access to private accounts.
- Will be conducted consistently for shortlisted candidates.

- Will be recorded appropriately.
- May be discussed with applicants during interview if relevant concerns are identified.

The School will assess any findings fairly, proportionately and in accordance with safeguarding principles.

Interviews

All shortlisted candidates will attend a formal interview and will be assessed against the requirements of the role and their suitability to work with children.

At least one member of every interview panel will have completed recognised safer recruitment training.

Interview processes will:

- Include safeguarding-focused questions.
- Explore the applicant's motivation for working with children.
- Consider attitudes to safeguarding and professional conduct.
- Examine any employment gaps or discrepancies.
- Explore any issues arising from references or online searches.
- Assess alignment with the School's values and ethos.

Applicants may also be required to undertake teaching observations, presentations, practical assessments or other recruitment activities relevant to the position.

Conditional Offers of Employment

All offers of employment are conditional upon the satisfactory completion of all required pre-employment checks.

No appointment will be confirmed until the School is satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and fulfil the requirements of the role.

Pre-Employment Checks

Before employment commences, the School will complete all checks required by law and statutory guidance.

These checks include:

- Identity verification using photographic identification and proof of address.
- Verification of date of birth.
- Right to work in the United Kingdom.

- Enhanced DBS certificate.
- Children's barred list check where the role involves regulated activity.
- Qualification checks where qualifications are required or relied upon.
- Employment history verification.
- Professional registration checks where applicable.
- Medical fitness assessment or declaration.
- Online search due diligence.
- Overseas checks where applicable.

References

A minimum of two references must be obtained before employment commences.

The School will:

- Obtain references directly from referees.
- Require one reference from the current or most recent employer.
- Verify references on receipt.
- Follow up any anomalies, inconsistencies or concerns.
- Seek additional clarification where required.
- Ask specific safeguarding-related questions.

References provided solely by candidates will not be accepted.

Prohibition from Teaching Checks

Where an individual undertakes teaching work, the School will complete a prohibition from teaching check through the appropriate government system before appointment.

This applies to teachers and other staff undertaking teaching work as defined in relevant regulations.

Section 128 Checks

The School will undertake Section 128 checks for:

- Senior leadership positions.
- Management roles.
- Governors.
- Proprietors.

- Other relevant managerial appointments within an independent school.

Overseas Checks

Candidates who have lived or worked abroad will be subject to additional checks as appropriate.

These may include:

- Criminal record checks.
- Certificates of good conduct.
- Professional standing letters.
- Teaching regulator checks.
- Additional references.

The School will make risk-based judgements where overseas information is unavailable despite reasonable efforts.

Single Central Record

The School maintains a Single Central Record (SCR) in accordance with statutory safeguarding requirements.

The SCR provides evidence that required safeguarding and recruitment checks have been completed and enables effective monitoring and inspection readiness.

The SCR includes, where applicable:

- Full name.
- Role.
- Identity check.
- Enhanced DBS check.
- Barred list check.
- Prohibition from teaching check.
- Section 128 check.
- Right to work check.
- Qualifications check.
- Overseas checks.
- Start date.
- Name of checker.

- Relevant comments and audit information.

All checks are recorded with the date completed and the name of the person who verified them.

Where the DBS Update Service is used, the School will record the verification date and outcome of the status check.

Existing Staff

Where concerns arise regarding the suitability of an existing member of staff, additional checks may be undertaken.

Additional checks may also be required where:

- Roles change.
- Staff move into regulated activity.
- Concerns arise regarding suitability.
- Regulatory requirements change.

The School will act promptly where safeguarding concerns are identified.

Regulated Activity & Volunteers

Volunteers are subject to safeguarding checks appropriate to their role and level of contact with pupils.

Volunteers undertaking regulated activity will be subject to the same checks as employees.

For supervised volunteers, the School will:

- Undertake a risk assessment.
- Determine an appropriate level of supervision.
- Ensure no unsupervised access to pupils takes place.
- Complete checks proportionate to the level of risk.

Under no circumstances will an unchecked volunteer be permitted to undertake regulated activity.

Regulated Activity and Volunteers

The School recognises that the Crime and Policing Act 2026 removed the supervision exemption from the definition of regulated activity with children with effect from **1 September 2026**. Prior to that date, unpaid work such as teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children was not classed as regulated activity where the individual was supervised by a person who was themselves engaged in regulated activity. That exemption no longer applies, and supervision does not remove an individual from the scope of regulated activity.

An individual who teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises children on behalf of the School is engaged in regulated activity where that work is carried out:

- frequently, meaning on more than three days in any period of 30 days; or
- at any time between 2.00am and 6.00am, where there is an opportunity for face-to-face contact with children, including on residential visits and overnight trips.

For the purposes of the 30-day test, days spent undertaking comparable work with children for other organisations — including sports clubs, faith settings, uniformed organisations and other schools — count towards the same total. The School will therefore ask volunteers to confirm whether they undertake similar activity elsewhere, and, where an individual volunteers across more than one organisation, will liaise with those organisations to establish which is best placed to obtain the necessary check.

Any volunteer engaged in regulated activity will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check including children's barred list information, obtained before the individual commences unsupervised work with pupils. Enhanced checks for volunteers are provided free of charge. Volunteers who are not engaged in regulated activity will be risk assessed by the School, which will determine whether an enhanced check without barred list information, or no check, is appropriate; that assessment will be recorded in writing.

Volunteers engaged in regulated activity are recorded on the School's single central record in the same way as staff. Where a volunteer is removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not resigned or ceased volunteering, because they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child, the School will make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as it would for a member of staff.

The School has identified all volunteers whose roles fall within the revised definition. Because regulated activity status changes only on 1 September 2026, applications for the relevant checks cannot be submitted before that date; the School has prepared these applications so that they may be submitted without delay from 1 September 2026, and will maintain appropriate supervision arrangements and a documented risk assessment for any affected volunteer in the interim.

Parents and others who assist the School only occasionally — for example at a single event, a one-off day trip or a parents' association activity — are not engaged in regulated activity by virtue of that assistance and are not subject to these requirements, although they will not be left unsupervised with pupils.

Where the School hosts or arranges work experience, it recognises that pupils under the age of 16 cannot be the subject of a DBS check. Where a workplace supervisor works with a pupil on more than three days in any period of 30 days, that supervisor is engaged in regulated activity and the School will satisfy itself that appropriate checks are in place. Where a pupil aged 16 or over undertakes work experience that constitutes regulated activity, the School will request the relevant check through the pupil's own school.

Agency Staff, Contractors and Peripatetic Staff

The School will obtain written confirmation that all required safer recruitment checks have been completed by the supplying agency or contractor.

The School will additionally:

- Verify the individual's identity on arrival.
- Confirm suitability to work at the School.
- Record relevant information appropriately.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed.

Peripatetic teachers employed directly by the School will undergo the same safer recruitment checks as other employees.

Governors and Proprietors

Governors and proprietors will be subject to the checks required by legislation and statutory guidance.

These include:

- Identity verification.
- Enhanced DBS checks.
- Section 128 checks.
- Overseas checks where applicable.
- Checks relating to charity trustee eligibility where relevant.

Induction

All newly appointed staff will participate in an induction programme which emphasises safeguarding responsibilities.

Induction includes:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- KCSIE Part One.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Low-Level Concerns Policy.
- Whistleblowing arrangements.
- Behaviour management procedures.

- Online safety expectations.
- Prevent Duty responsibilities.
- Relevant role-specific safeguarding requirements.

As of KCSIE 2026, all staff are expected to read Part One and understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

Referrals to the DBS and Teaching Regulation Agency

The School will make referrals where required by law.

Referrals may be made to:

- The Disclosure and Barring Service.
- The Teaching Regulation Agency.
- Other relevant regulatory authorities.

Referrals will be made when legal thresholds are met and in accordance with statutory requirements.

Data Protection and Record Retention

The School processes recruitment information in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Recruitment records, including:

- Application forms.
- Interview notes.
- References.
- Online search records.
- Vetting documentation.
- Recruitment decisions.

will be stored securely and retained in accordance with the School's Information and Records Retention Policy.

The School will not retain DBS certificates for longer than six months unless a lawful reason exists to do so.

Monitoring, Audit and Inspection Readiness

The School regularly reviews its safer recruitment processes and audits the Single Central Record to ensure compliance and accuracy.

Monitoring activities include:

- SCR audits.
- Recruitment file reviews.
- Safeguarding audits.
- Governor oversight.
- Compliance reviews.
- External scrutiny where appropriate.

Any deficiencies identified will be addressed promptly and appropriate actions implemented.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually.
- Following changes to legislation or statutory guidance.
- Following inspection findings.
- Following safeguarding reviews.
- Whenever organisational changes require revision.

Through rigorous safer recruitment procedures and effective maintenance of the Single Central Record, **Park School** seeks to maintain the highest standards of safeguarding and ensure that all pupils are educated and cared for by suitable, appropriately vetted and professionally competent adults.

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