



## SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

<b>DATE CREATED</b>	June 2024	<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW</b>	September 2026
<b>POLICY OWNER</b>	Rachele Gale, Director of People		
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	HR		

<b>Purpose of policy</b>	This policy reflects St Elizabeth's approach to Safer Recruitment and is supplemented by the recruitment and best practice guidance, which contains specific information on the delivery of an effective recruitment and selection process.
<b>Intended audience</b>	All staff and volunteers
<b>Links to other policies</b>	Volunteering policy, EEDI policy, Recruitment and best practice guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Safer Recruitment

## **Introduction**

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of adults, children and young people in education and care. St Elizabeth's are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of residents, learners, children and young people in its care and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

## **Scope**

It is essential that our approach to recruitment and selection responds to an increasingly competitive market for the best talent, both domestically and internationally. The scope of this policy is to set out the framework and minimum requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS)
- to ensure that the organisation meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks and to deter, identify and reject prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people
- to ensure that all applicants are considered equally and consistently and that no applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds and specifically any protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010
- attract the best possible applicants to vacancies on the basis of their merit, abilities and suitability
- to ensure that all staff who lead recruitment processes are aware of and hold delegated responsibility for ensuring that all recruitment processes are delivered in line with the safer recruitment policy

## **Recruitment & Selection Procedure**

St Elizabeth's attraction and recruitment process consist of the following steps:

### **Job Description & Person Specification**

A job description and person specification must be 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. The person specification details the qualifications, 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 and vulnerable adults. Approval to recruit must be obtained by the Executive Team before advertising can begin.

## Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, St Elizabeth's will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible. Advertisements will include the following statement:

*St Elizabeth's Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, vulnerable adults and young people. The successful applicant will be required to undertake an enhanced disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service. Some of our positions involve regulated activity relevant to vulnerable children, adults and young people. It is a criminal offence for people who are barred from working in regulated activity to apply for roles that require them to work unsupervised with that particular group. Our vacancies are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.*

## Application forms

Part applications and curriculum vitae's (CV's) will be accepted at application stage but all applicants will be required to complete a full application form as part of pre-employment checks and will be asked to provide:

- Personal details, current and former names, current address and NI number
- Details of their present (or last employment) and reason for leaving
- Full employment history since leaving school/education (including education, employment, voluntary work and reasons for any gaps in employment)
- Qualifications, the awarding body and date of award
- Details of referees

The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding any criminal record and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence 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.

## Interviews

Selection and assessment techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post and may include a variety of methods. St Elizabeth's will normally conduct face-to-face interviews or via remote methods using video conferencing software, such as Teams or similar.

The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any identified anomalies or gaps in employment in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria. Applicants will also be required to demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of vulnerable adults, children and young people (via our standard safeguarding question).

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview

process. At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All shortlisted candidates invited to attend an interview will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in the UK, in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS Code of Practice Regulations (including evidence of settled status as required) and to complete the Criminal Records & Childcare Disclosure Self Declaration Form (see Appendix 1). This will be copied and verified by a line manager, member of the HR team or their nominee.

## **Feedback**

St Elizabeth's will always provide feedback to internal candidates following an interview in a supportive and constructive manner. This would usually be given by the Hiring Manager, especially when the applicant is a member of their current team. Feedback may be given to external candidates on request by the Hiring Manager/Recruitment team at the discretion of St Elizabeth's.

## **Offer of employment and pre-employment checks process**

Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including anyone who has lived or worked abroad, will be conditional and subject to pre-employment checks to the satisfaction of St Elizabeth's. We will:

- verify the candidate's identity. Copies of documents should be taken, placed on file and authenticated by the HR team
- verify the candidate's right to work in the UK
- obtain a minimum of two references which will be taken up to cover a period of 5 years. Ideally 3 years' employment references and a character reference to cover 5 years. References will be obtained from the candidate's current or most recent employer (if they have worked in care within this period we will obtain references from all previous employers - where there are numerous periods of employment within the last 5 years, a view will be taken by the Director of People as to which references are obtained). A character reference will also be accepted and will ideally be provided by a person of standing within the community such as a nurse, accountant, doctor or other. Character references will be accepted from a family friend or other where employment references cover the full period and can be relied on. All references will be sought directly from the referee. Open references or testimonials provided by the candidate or references addressed "to whom it may concern" will not be accepted. If a candidate is moving internally, the reference must be from the line manager, supervisor or Head of Service and not from a colleague. St Elizabeth's reserves the right to obtain verbal references before appointment or offer in agreement with the candidate.
- obtain an enhanced Adults and Children's Workforce DBS certificate including barred list information. DBS checks are not required for staff who are based in our charity shops,

with the exception of the Shop Manager role (not working in regulated activity - see Appendix 2). Trustees and Governors are required to have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the DBS. It is the responsibility of the Company Secretary to alert the HR team to apply for the certificate for any of their Trustees who do not already have one. The Head of Service may carry out a risk assessment if candidates will be starting work prior to a DBS certificate being available. Final approval will rest with the Director of People and will be dependent on the area they are joining and the duties of their role. It is St Elizabeth's policy to re-check an employee's DBS Certificates at the point where they have been employed for three years or they are promoted or change role within the organisation.

- ensure all potential employees have completed a Criminal Record and Childcare Disqualification Self-Declaration Form disclosing any relevant convictions (see Appendix 1).
- Where disclosures are made at interview or pre-employment stage in relation to DBS checks or childcare disclosure declarations, these will be referred to the Director of People for review. The Director of People will evaluate and risk assess such declarations and consideration will be given to the following before a position is confirmed:
  - Whether the conviction is relevant to the position applied for
  - The seriousness of any offence revealed.
  - The age of the applicant at the time of the offence(s).
  - The length of time since the offence(s) occurred.
  - Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour.
  - The circumstances surrounding the offence(s), and the explanation(s) offered by the person concerned.
  - Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour.

On occasion and where necessary, declarations will be discussed with Service Heads or Registered Managers before clearance to start is given.

- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities by completion of our standard Occupational Health questionnaire. A successful applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish that they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role and to identify whether reasonable adjustments or specific support is needed.
- if the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK for a period of 6 months or more in the last 5 years then an overseas police check will be required which will be checked and verified by the HR team.
- verify essential professional qualifications for the role by viewing original certificates and taking certified copies. This applies to a variety of roles i.e. the Teacher Services system should be used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS) and the completion of teacher induction or probation.

- ensure the candidate is checked against the prohibition from teaching orders where applicable.
- ensure the candidate is checked against the prohibition from management roles (section 128) check where applicable (part of barred list check for those in regulated activity).

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training.

### **Online searches**

Following updated guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education; St Elizabeth's will also undertake an online check during pre-employment checks. Further information is available in the Recruitment & Best Practice Guidance.

### **Clearance to start**

Once pre-employment checks are fully completed by the HR Assistants the file will be passed to the HR Officer for first sign off and the Head of HR Services/Director of People for final approval. All information will be stored on the employees electronic file.

### **Record retention and data protection**

If an applicant is successful in their application, St Elizabeth's will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help discharge its obligations as an employer e.g. so that the organisation may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue. This documentation will be retained by the organisation for the duration of the successful applicant's employment. All information retained on employees is held securely and electronically.

### **Single Central Record**

St. Elizabeth's is required to keep a single central record (SCR) of pre-employment checks, referred to in the Keeping Children Safe in Education Regulations as "the register". Due to our complexity and scale this requirement covers 3 areas:

- Children's Home and School academic
- Supported Living and College academic
- Day Opportunities and Windhill

For the areas stated above, the SCR will cover the following people:

- all staff (including teacher/lecturer trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff)

- for independent schools and colleges, all members of the proprietor body and governors
- the members and Trustees of the Charitable Board
- confirmation that these checks have been carried out along with the date the check was undertaken/obtained must be logged on this record for all employees of our organisation.

The Single Central Record is regularly reviewed by HR, the Director of Children's Education, Director of Learning and any relevant Head of Service.

## **Induction**

Our organisation recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but must be part of a larger policy framework for all employees.

Our organisation will therefore aim to provide ongoing training and support for all employees. All appropriate and relevant employees who are new to St. Elizabeth's will receive induction training that will include our safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices. Regular meetings and supervisions should be held during the first 6 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s).

## **Contractors, Agency Workers and Volunteers**

St. Elizabeth's will obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organisation they use, that the organisation has carried out pre-employment checks to the same standard as St Elizabeth's would otherwise complete for its staff. This will include a barred list check, which will be obtained by the agency or third party prior to appointing the individual.

The Reception team or appropriate point of contact will check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Volunteers who, on an unsupervised basis, teach or look after children regularly, or provide personal care on a one-off basis in the school, will be in regulated activity. St Elizabeth's will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (which should include barred list information) for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity. Further information can be found within the Volunteering Policy.

Further information on Agency workers can be found in the Recruitment best practice and guidance document.

## **Policy Review**

The Director of People will review this policy annually.

## Authorisation and Signature

This Policy is the authorised version agreed by the Trustees of St Elizabeth's. All employees are expected to follow this policy and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

## Appendix 1 - Criminal Record & Childcare Disqualification Self-Declaration Form

This form must be completed by all applicants who are invited for interview where a Disclosure and Barring Certificate (also known as a DBS), is required. The information disclosed on this form will not be shared with the recruiting line manager during the application process.

### Policy statement on recruiting applicants with criminal records

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore applicants are required to declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that are not protected (i.e. that are not filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013).

For further information on filtering please refer to [Nacro guidance](#) and the [DBS website](#). We recognise the contribution that ex-offenders can make as employees and volunteers and welcome applications from them. A person's criminal record will not, in itself, debar that person from being appointed to this post. Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Suitable applicants will not be refused posts because of offences which are not relevant to, and do not place them at or make them a risk in, the role for which they are applying.

All cases will be examined on an individual basis and will take the following into consideration:

- Whether the conviction is relevant to the position applied for.
- The seriousness of any offence revealed.
- The age of the applicant at the time of the offence(s).
- The length of time since the offence(s) occurred.
- Whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour.
- The circumstances surrounding the offence(s), and the explanation(s) offered by the person concerned.
- Whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour.

It is important that applicants understand that failure to disclose all convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not protected could result in disciplinary proceedings or dismissal. Further advice and guidance on disclosing a criminal record can be obtained from [Nacro](#). Please note that, if you are unsuccessful, this disclosure form will be securely destroyed within 6 months of your application.

Name of candidate:	
Previous names(s):	
Address with postcode:	
Contact number:	
Date of birth:	
Gender:	
<p>Do you have any convictions (spent/unspent) cautions, reprimands, final warnings or pending charges which are not 'protected' as defined by either:</p> <p>the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended in England, Scotland and Wales in 2013</p> <p>or the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 as amended in Northern Ireland?</p> <p>If yes, please disclose overleaf or to a member of the recruitment team in a confidential basis.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<p>Have you ever been known to any children's services department or Police as being a risk or potential risk to Children?</p> <p>If yes, please provide additional information.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<p>Have you been the subject of any investigation and/or sanction by any organisation or body due to concerns about your behaviour towards children?</p> <p>If yes, please provide further information and include details of the outcome:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<p>Have you ever been the subject of disciplinary sanctions or been asked to leave employment or voluntary activity due to inappropriate behaviour towards children?</p> <p>If yes, please provide further information:</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

<p>Do you have any overseas convictions?</p> <p>If you have been out of the country for a period of 6 months or longer in the past 5 years we will require a certificate of good conduct (police check) from the country(s) that you have been in. You can obtain this by contacting the embassy.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> YES    <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
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<b>Confirmation of declaration</b> (tick box below)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I declare that the information provided on this form is correct.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree that the information provided here may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and I understand that an offer of employment may be withdrawn or disciplinary action may be taken if information is not disclosed by me and subsequently come to the organisation's attention.
<input type="checkbox"/>	In accordance with the organisation's procedures if required I agree to provide a valid criminal record certificate and consent to the organisation clarifying any information provided on the disclosure with the agencies providing it.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree to inform the organisation within 24 hours if I am subsequently investigated by any agency or organisation in relation to concerns about my behaviour towards children or young people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of the DBS check and information supplied by third parties may be supplied by the organisation to other persons or organisations in circumstances where this is considered necessary to safeguard children.

<b>Signature of candidate:</b>	
<b>Print name:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

## Appendix 2 – Regulated Activity

Regulated Activity Regulated activity includes:

- a) Teaching, training, instructing, caring for (see (c) below) or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children.
- b) Work for a limited range of establishments (known as ‘specified places’, which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers.

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly. Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of frequency or whether they are supervised or not.

This includes: c) relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:

- personal care includes helping a child with eating and drinking for reasons of illness or disability or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing for reasons of age, illness or disability
- health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional