Safer Staff Recruitment Policy

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy is needed to ensure that the school appoints the very best people for posts in the school and that safe recruitment practices are rigorously enforced. It is composed in compliance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2026 and the Lingfield College Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy document.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is:

- To ensure all those employed at Lingfield College are suitable individuals to work with children and young people.
- To ensure all those employed at Lingfield College are the best qualified and experienced to work with children and young people.
- To ensure all those employed at Lingfield College share the school's ethos, values, ways of working and aspirations for its pupils and the community it serves.
- To meet the requirements of the safeguarding agenda and protect both pupils and staff within the establishment.
- To meet government recommendations to ensure that the designated staff receives appropriate Safeguarding Children training, as provided by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board.
- To ensure all staff understand the requirements within safeguarding and their role.

3.0 GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Identification of the need for an appointment

The need for an appointment will be assessed as required, e.g. when a member of staff leaves, during expansion or when the budget is under review. The final decision to recruit is made by the Headmaster and/or Governors as advised by the Head of Prep School or Deputy Heads at Senior School. The process is then instigated and managed by the Head of HR.

3.2 Advertisements and post details

Once the need for an appointment has been identified and approved, the Head of HR will proceed to advertise internally, locally and nationally via the school website, the internet and more traditional media as appropriate to budget, seniority of the post and experience available within the school. Filed speculative CVs/applications will also be reviewed.

3.3 Advertisements will carry information about the school and the post. Potential candidates have access to a candidate information pack and application form via the website which will contain the following:

- details of the post
- a job description and person specification
- information about the school

3.4 All information pertaining to posts including job adverts will contain a statement of commitment to safeguarding children and young people, such as:

3.5 "Lingfield College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants must undergo child protection screening, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service."

3.6 On recruitment correspondence it is stated:

"At Lingfield College we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates. We are committed to providing a mutually supportive working environment where every individual is treated fairly, respected and valued."

At Lingfield College we uphold fundamental British values and expect all employees to do the same.

4.0 APPLICATIONS AND SHORTLISTING CANDIDATES

4.1 When a speculative application for employment is received at the school and there is no vacancy, the application should be acknowledged in writing by the HR department, thanking them for their interest, stating that there is currently no vacancy and advising that the details will be kept on file for 6 months for future reference. These applications will be filed by the HR department, and they are reviewed if a vacancy arises. In this instance, the candidate will be contacted if applicable.

4.2 All applications received as a result of an advertisement for a post will be acknowledged by the HR department, thanking the applicant for responding, and advising that the school will contact the applicant if it is decided to take the application further. The application form states that the applicant includes a full employment history which can be checked against other information obtained.

4.3 Once the closing date has passed the Head of HR and relevant members of the interview panel will shortlist the candidates. The HR department will then invite them for interview, explaining what they need to do in preparation. Candidates should also be told to bring documentary evidence that verifies their:

- identity e.g. passport or photo-card driving licence
- address e.g. a utility bill dated within the last three months
- change of name if applicable, e.g. the original copy of a marriage certificate.

4.4 All shortlisted applicants will be required to complete a self-declaration form prior to interview in which they will be asked to provide information about their criminal records history and other factors relevant to their suitability to work with children. This information will be considered and discussed with applicants at interview. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the application at the point of interview.

4.5 As part of the shortlisting process an online search is carried out as part of the due diligence on shortlisted candidates. This helps to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which will be explored with the candidate at interview.

5.0 REFERENCES

5.1 Candidates are asked to provide referee contact details when completing the application form. References are taken up from both of the referees nominated by the candidate, one of which should be an up-to-date employer referee, i.e. current or most recent employer. The HR department will request a written reference. Where there is a quick turnaround, the Head of HR may call the referees and take a reference over the phone, whilst ensuring verification of the referee. Written notes, signed and dated by the person taking up the reference will be kept in the file. Additional references may be requested where appropriate, e.g. where an applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past. Copies of these requests and the references themselves will be attached to the original file. Copies of the references will be passed to the interviewers for information.

5.2 The School will ask all referees if the candidate is suitable to work with children and to provide facts of any substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold set out in Part 4 of the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. Substantiated allegations that meet the harm threshold should be included in references. Any repeated concerns or allegations which do not meet the harm threshold which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated, or malicious should not be included in any reference.

5.3 The School will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or open references or testimonials. All references are verified. Where references are received electronically, the School will ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

5.4 The School will compare any information provided by the referee with that provided by the candidate on the Application Form. Any inconsistencies will be discussed with the candidate.

5.5 The referee will be requested to provide information on the following:

- The candidate's suitability for the post and to work with children and young people
- Current or final salary
- Details of any outstanding disciplinary issues, if applicable
- Whether the applicant has been the subject of any allegations or concerns which relate to the safety or welfare of children and young people or their behaviour towards children
- Whether the referee recommends them for the post – without reservation, with reservation, or not at all.

5.6 All references will be scrutinised before the interview so that any issues arising can be investigated during the interview.

6.0 SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES ON THE INTERVIEW DAY:

During the day, the following checks will be made by the HR Department:

- Proof of identity e.g. passport or photo-card driving licence
- Proof of address: utility bill dated within the last three months
- Evidence of change of name if applicable e.g. the original copy of a marriage certificate

- The application form will ask for, where appropriate:
  - DFES reference number
  - Confirmation of qualified teacher status
  - Former names by which the applicant has been known in the past
  - A declaration from the applicant about any convictions, cautions or bind-overs, or details in a sealed envelope

7.0 SELECTION PROCEDURES

7.1 Interviews will normally take place over the course of a day and may continue over successive days in the case of a senior post. A recruitment pack is prepared by the HR department for the interview panel. This pack contains the application form, CV, covering letter, references, interview questions for each candidate as well as a copy of the job description and person specification for the role. The interview will start with a welcome and introduction by the Head of HR.

7.2 A variety of selection procedures will be used, for example:

- **Formal interview**: Questions are set which test a candidate's specific skills and abilities to carry out the job applied for, developments in their career, their attitude towards children and young people in general and also their commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Questions will have been agreed in advance. All candidates must be given the same questions and tasks to do, although it is entirely appropriate to ask candidates about issues arising from their initial application and from other selection methods used on the day. Specific questions relating to Safeguarding and Prevent knowledge and/or experience will be included in the interview questions. Gaps and changes in employment should be fully explored during the interview, as should any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate or the referee. Candidates should be asked about convictions or other information which they have declared where appropriate.
- **Teaching a lesson**: This provides very important information, especially about how well the candidates plan lessons, how they interact with pupils and how well they teach. This does need careful planning, and pupils need to be told in advance what they are doing and why.
- **Tour of the school**: A member of staff or sixth form student will take the candidate for a tour of the school, and this will be an informal opportunity for the candidate to find out about the post and the School.
- **Skills Task:** Support staff candidates may be asked to perform an exercise relevant to the role for which they are applying e.g. ICT exercise or skills test.

7.3 Designated staff involved in the interview process will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. This training is then filtered to Governors and Senior Staff. The Headmaster and Head of HR have both completed this training and the HR team also have undertaken Prevent Training in line with The Prevent Duty.

8.0 THE APPOINTMENT

8.1 Taking all the evidence gathered, the panel and Head of HR make their choice. The successful candidate is made a verbal offer of the role by telephone once the decision has been reached.

8.2 When the post has been verbally accepted by the candidate the Head of HR will send the successful candidate two copies of a contract with a formal offer letter confirming the appointment and setting out the terms below.

- position offered
- spine point/hourly rate of pay/annual salary
- starting date
- working hours
- conditions of the offer

The applicant signs both copies of the letter and contract, returning one copy.

8.3 The letter states that the offer is conditional upon the following:

- acceptable completion of the DBS check and that supporting original documentation must be supplied in person
- satisfactory references have been gained
- evidence is provided of original teaching and degree certificates and other academic qualifications where applicable before appointment is made, with copies retained on the HR file
- verification is received of the candidate's medical fitness
- the candidate's eligibility to work in the UK
- The Head of HR will inform the unsuccessful interviewees of the outcome and will offer feedback on their interview process.

9.0 IN LINE WITH SURREY SAFEGUARDING BEST PRACTICE:

9.1 All checks will be confirmed in writing and retained on the candidate's HR file, together with copies of any documents used to verify identity and qualifications. A record will be kept of the date the disclosure was obtained and by whom, the level of disclosure and the unique reference number.

9.2 Where an applicant subscribes to the DBS Update Service, they will be asked to give consent to check there have not been changes since the issue of a disclosure certificate. A barred list check is also carried out.

9.3 In the case of agency staff, we set out the safeguarding requirements between the agency and the School to ensure the agency carries out the same checks for any individual working at the School. Identity checks are carried out on agency staff on arrival in School and they are required to provide a copy of the appropriate level of DBS check.

9.4 The HR team check with the relevant supply agency that the required checks have been carried out (identity, enhanced disclosure, right to work in the UK, barred list, prohibition, qualifications, overseas checks plus those checks set out in KCSIE as 'pre-employment' checks).

9.5 A record will be kept of evidence to show that such checks have been carried out in respect of supply staff and volunteers whether recruited directly or through an agency.

9.6 All references must be kept on the candidate's HR file or, in the case of supply staff, volunteers or temporary staff not recruited through an agency, on a central record within the department.

9.7 Where information gained by the prospective employer calls into question the candidate's suitability to work with children, or where a candidate has provided false information, the facts should be reported to the Police and/or the DFE Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit.

9.8 The Head of HR will request a new DBS for a current member of staff should there be a significant change to an individual's role.

9.9 In the instance a DBS has not come through prior to an individual commencing employment a risk assessment will be completed by the HR team, where the individual and line manager are given guidance and expectations in terms of supervision. A barred list check will also be carried out and noted centrally. The exception to this is for any new staff taking up a post within Nursery/Early Years, where a DBS check is required to be completed before commencement of employment.

10.0 AFTER THE APPOINTMENT AND PRE EMPLOYMENT

10.1 A Disclosure Barring Service check will be initiated for the successful candidate as soon as possible after the offer has been accepted and relevant documentation received, at least before commencement of employment. In very exceptional circumstances, if a DBS certificate has not been returned, the Head of HR will conduct a risk assessment to ascertain if an individual can start before DBS clearance. Any previous DBS certificate from another establishment will be considered and if the individual is deemed able to start, the School will ensure the

individual is supervised at all times until the DBS certificate is received. The DBS Risk Assessment will be reviewed every two weeks.

10.2 As there are children under 8 years old in the School, Lingfield College pays due regard to the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (September 2018). The School does not knowingly employ people to work in childcare or allow them to be directly concerned in its management if they are 'disqualified.' The School informs relevant people of this legislation and takes steps to gather sufficient and accurate information. This information is recorded on the Single Central Register. An annual check to remind staff of their duties is carried out by the HR department.

10.3 The Head of HR carries out prohibition from teaching checks and also prohibition from management checks in line with s.128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. In addition overseas checks are carried out on staff who have lived and worked overseas.

10.4 An induction programme is compiled for all newly appointed staff and volunteers. This will incorporate making new staff aware of the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures and the identity of staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities, through a Safeguarding Briefing with the DSL in their first week. New starters are required to complete online Safeguarding and Prevent Training on or before their first day or as soon as possible within their first two weeks. New staff are provided with information about safe practice and given a full explanation of their role and responsibilities and expected standard of conduct. All members of staff and volunteers are provided with child protection awareness information at induction, including the following documents in their arrival pack:

- The School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which gives details of who to discuss a concern with
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Reporting Low Level Concerns
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Copy of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) September 2026

10.5 New staff are asked to confirm that they have read the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSiE Part 1(2026).

10.6 Appraisals are undertaken regularly as well as class observations for Teaching Staff and relevant appraisals for support staff.

10.7 **All** staff files are kept by the HR Department.

11.0 RECRUITMENT OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors delegates the responsibility of governor recruitment and succession planning to the Governance and Nominations Committee which meets to fulfil this purpose. A skills matrix is used to capture the skills of the governing body and identify any gaps. When a requirement is established, governors are found through a variety of means, such as, but not limited to, current or ex-parents, ex-staff, industry contacts and known contacts. Potential governors usually have an informal discussion with the Headmaster in the first instance to ascertain interest, followed by a formal meeting with The Chair of Governors and another governor member of the Governance and Nominations Committee to discuss the role in full, which includes an opportunity for both parties to ensure the appointment is suitable. New governors undertake an induction process which involves a series of face-to-face meetings and safeguarding training in school, as well as training and e-learning provided by AGBIS (Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools). Governors are required to undertake a DBS check, and the Chair of Governors has an Enhanced DBS issued by the Secretary of State.

12.0 DATA PROTECTION

As part of the recruitment process, Lingfield College collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. The School takes security of data seriously and appropriate measures are taken to keep personal data secure. Candidates are required on application to give consent for the School to hold personal information for up to 12 months. In the case of unsuccessful applications, personal data will be deleted or destroyed after 12 months.

13.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The school will evaluate its Safer Staff Recruitment Policy each year and make appropriate revisions.

14.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The following responsibilities have been assigned:

- The Headmaster, Pastoral Deputy Head, Prep School Head and HR Department will oversee the policy and its implementation
- The HR department will collect documentation for the DBS check and process the application; take up references; and complete and update the single central record.
- The Head of HR issues contracts of employment.