

SAFER RECRUITMENT & SELECTION POLICY

Who is this policy for?	All staff including admin, volunteers, parents and others
Date of this review:	August 2026
Date of next review:	August 2027
Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy?	Head-teacher
Signed off by Governor-Safeguarding Lead:	August 2026

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: bullying and harassment, capability, complaints procedure, confidentiality, continuing professional development, dealing with allegations of abuse, dealing with peer to peer allegations, disability, equal opportunities and diversity, grievance, health and safety, intimate care and physical contact, performance management, probationary period, policy and guidelines for substitute teachers, retentions, safeguarding, staff absence and whistleblowing.

This policy has been updated to reflect Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, which comes into force on 1 September 2026, together with other relevant statutory guidance and legislation.

1. Introduction

Side by Side (SBS) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and takes recruitment, vetting, selection and barring of staff very seriously. We expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Our recruitment and selection practices and processes are highly robust and contain necessary measures to ensure that the employed workforce fulfils their roles and responsibilities and meets all safeguarding requirements.

We are committed to dealing effectively with safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults working in or on behalf of the school. Where an allegation indicates that an adult may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, behaved towards a child in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm, or behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children, the matter will be reported immediately to the Headteacher and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding and allegations procedures. The Headteacher will consider whether referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is required.

2. Aim

Our recruitment processes reflect Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and other relevant statutory requirements and guidance, together with the safeguarding arrangements and procedures of the relevant local safeguarding partners.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- Attract the best possible applicants to vacancies
- Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people from following through with an application
- Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.

The appointment of all employees will be made on merit and in accordance with the provisions of Employment Law and Keeping Children Safe in Education. We will ensure that people are treated solely on the basis of their abilities and potential, as an equal opportunity employer.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board of the school will:

- ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the safe and fair recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers in accordance with Department for Education guidance and legal requirements
- monitor the school's compliance with them
- enable appropriate staff and governors to access safer recruitment training.

The Headteacher will:

- ensure that the school operates safe and fair recruitment and selection procedures which are regularly reviewed and up-dated to reflect any changes to legislation and statutory guidance
- ensure that all appropriate pre-appointment and safeguarding checks have been carried out in respect of staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors and other individuals working in or on behalf of the school, in accordance with their role and the requirements of KCSIE. monitor any contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- promote the safety and well-being of children and young people at every stage of this process.
- take reasonable steps to ensure that recruitment, employment and engagement practices minimise the risk of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation.

Delegation of Appointments and Constitution of Selection Panel

The Governing Board delegates the power to offer employment for all posts to the Headteacher. Selection panels will comprise a minimum of two people. Every selection panel will include at least one member who has undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training. For senior appointments a member of the governing body will be involved in the selection process.

4. Recruitment and Selection process

Advertising

All vacant posts will be advertised to ensure equality of opportunity and encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. This will normally mean placing an advertisement externally. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient, suitably qualified internal candidates, or staff are at risk of redundancy, vacancies may be advertised internally before an external advertisement is placed. Any internal recruitment process will follow the procedures set out in this policy. All advertisements for posts, paid or unpaid, will include the following or equivalent statements: 'Side by Side is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants will be subject to appropriate safeguarding and pre-employment checks, including an enhanced DBS check and children's barred list check where the role is eligible and requires this.'

Information for Applicants

All applicants will be provided with:

- A Job Description, outlining the duties of the post, and a Person Specification
- An Application Form (CVs will not be accepted unless alongside an application form)
- A description of the school, relevant to the vacant post
- Reference to the Safeguarding Policy, Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy, DBS and other pre-employment requirements
- Disclosure of Disability in our admissions and applications procedures
- Code of conduct/dress code
- where relevant, the closing date for the receipt of applications

Prospective applicants must complete, in full, and return a signed application form. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed forms has not passed. Candidates submitting an application form completed on line will be asked to include an electronic signature. A CV will not be accepted in place of a completed application form.

Short Listing and Reference Requests

The selection panel will shortlist applicants against the Person Specification for the post. The criteria for selection will be consistently applied to all applicants. The selection panel will

agree the applicants to be invited to interview. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record and any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, where the information is legally required or permitted to be disclosed. The school will make clear that candidates are not required to disclose protected convictions or cautions. Two references, one of which must be from the candidate's current/most recent employer, will be taken up as part of the recruitment process and any discrepancies investigated. References will be sought directly from the referee and, where necessary, s/he will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges. Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted in order to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges. If a candidate for a post working with children is not currently employed in a post working with children, a reference will be sought from the most recent employment in which the candidate has worked with children to confirm details of the candidate's employment and his/her reasons for leaving. A reference from a candidate's most recent place of education will be requested from those applying straight from a place of education e.g. school, college.

Reference requests will ask the referee to confirm, in writing:

- The referee's relationship to the candidate
- Details of the candidate's current post
- The candidate's performance history and conduct
- Whether the candidate has been subject to capability procedures and the outcome of this
- Whether the candidate has been subject to disciplinary action relating to the safety and welfare of children, including where the sanction has expired, and the outcome of this
- Details of any substantiated allegations or concerns about the candidate relating to the safety and welfare of children
- Whether the referee has any reservations as to the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people (if so, the school will ask for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the candidate may be unsuitable to work with children)
- The candidate's suitability for the post with explicit reference to the job description and person specification.

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures and DBS clearance.

As part of the shortlisting process, shortlisted candidates will be informed that the school may carry out an online search as part of its due diligence. The purpose of the search is to identify

any publicly available information that may need to be explored with the candidate at interview in relation to their suitability to work with children.

References are the "property" of the selection panel and strict confidentiality will be observed. Employer testimonials i.e. those provided by the candidate and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' will not be accepted. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. References will be verified and any discrepancies or areas of potential concern will be discussed with the candidate at interview.

If the field of applicants is felt to be weak, the post may be re-advertised.

Interviews

Before the interviews, the selection panel will agree on the interview format. Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates. Interviews will normally take place face-to-face. Where exceptional circumstances require an interview to take place remotely, appropriate arrangements will be made to verify the candidate's identity and the successful candidate will meet the school in person before appointment where appropriate. However, the successful applicant will still need to attend a follow up, in person meeting, in advance of any final confirmation of post. Candidates invited to interview will receive:

- Confirmation of the interview date, time and venue.
- Details of the interview day schedule including details of the panel members
- Details of any tasks to be undertaken as part of the interview process, where applicable
- The opportunity to discuss the process prior to the interview.

The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each candidate meets the requirement of the Job Description and the Person Specification and each candidate will be assessed against all of the criteria for the post. The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on protected characteristics under the Equality Act will be asked. The selection process for every post will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of child safeguarding issues. Candidates will always be required:

- To explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment and/or educational history
- To explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the selection panel
- To disclose relevant criminal-history and suitability information in accordance with the school's self-declaration requirements and applicable legislation.
- To demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people

- To demonstrate a positive attitude towards working with children and especially those with SEN

The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those protected, that the candidate has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment. The recruitment documentation will be retained. In line with GDPR legislation, applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them. All information about unsuccessful candidates will be held and then securely destroyed as per our retentions policy.

4. Checks

Pre-appointment checks

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

Modern Slavery and Exploitation

As part of its commitment to safeguarding and lawful employment practices, Side by Side School seeks to minimise the risk of modern slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and exploitation. The School undertakes appropriate pre-employment checks, including verification of identity and right-to-work status, and expects agencies, contractors and other organisations providing staff or services to comply with relevant employment legislation and ethical employment practices.

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify a candidate's identity using three sources including a current photo ID (originals) and proof of address (originals) except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available; the advice of the school administrator will be sought if this is the case. Where possible/available the use of a UK birth certificate is a preferred source of ID.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS certificate, including children's barred list information where the individual will be engaging in regulated activity and the check is legally permitted and required.
 - **DBS Update Service** – For individuals who have joined this service this can be used to check the applicant. Subject to consent from the applicant, confirmation of the certificate matching the identity of the individual and original certification checked.

- Where a DBS check is required, the school will obtain and examine the original DBS certificate before the individual begins work or, where permitted by KCSIE, within 30 calendar days of the certificate's issue date. The certificate will be checked against the individual's identity and any information disclosed will be considered before confirming suitability.
- Check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a Prohibition Order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online Service, which is administered by the school administrator
- Use the Employer Access Online Service to check information about any teacher qualifications held and whether induction has been passed, which is administered by the school administrator
- Where relevant a section 128 check will be carried out
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities (a job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role)
- Verify the candidate's right to work in the UK (if there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then we will follow advice given by the school administrator)
- Make any further checks that we consider appropriate if the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK including information on sanctions or restrictions imposed by EEA professional regulating authorities, and foreign criminal checks
- Verify professional qualifications (original certificates), as appropriate

All checks will be:

- Documented and retained on the personnel file
- Recorded on the school's Single Central Record
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.

The pre-employment checks listed above must be completed before the employee starts work. Exceptions will only be made in circumstances where a risk assessment has been undertaken. Exceptions will never be made in the case of the Barred List and Teacher Prohibition checks.

- In exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may permit an individual to commence work before receipt of the DBS certificate only where this is lawful and all other required checks have been satisfactorily completed. Where the individual will be engaging in regulated activity, the school must ensure that the required children's barred list check has been completed before regulated activity begins. A written risk assessment must be completed, appropriate supervision and other safeguarding

measures put in place, and the outstanding DBS application monitored until the certificate is received and checked. If a decision is taken to commence an employee prior to receiving clearance, their contract of employment should remain subject to this condition being met. The employee must have completed and submitted their completed disclosure application to the DBS. The application's progress within the DBS system should be checked and monitored on a regular basis.

5. Checking and Re-checking of existing employees

- As a responsible employer, we will therefore exercise caution in the portability of disclosures. Portability carries a risk and should only be considered as part of an overall risk evaluation of the specific role and upon sight of an enhanced disclosure that is less than 2y old. A new disclosure must be applied for, and the contract will remain subject to this requirement.
- When using of agency staff, confirmation from the Agency of their DBS is required.
- All existing employees who transfer from a post that does not require an enhanced check, to one that does, will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.
- Ensure that any employee who has been subject to an enhanced disclosure but where that disclosure is now more than three years old, should be re-checked for a further enhanced disclosure.
- That a rolling programme is put in place to capture all re-checking, at three yearly intervals.
- A Headteacher may deem at any time that an employee should be subject to an enhanced DBS check, provided that they can justify that the employee has "given cause for concern" and is employed in a position that meets the criteria for working with, or having contact with children.

6. Disclosures

Compliance with Relevant Legislation

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with the legislation outlined in the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. It is imperative that staff ensure they disclose all relevant information in accordance with this act to uphold the safety and well-being of the children in our care. For more information, please refer to the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 on the official government website: [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006)

- A disclosure containing information relating to convictions, cautions, reprimands, etc., plus information relating to non-convictions, but which police forces deem relevant. If a disclosure containing above mentioned information is received for an employee who has already commenced work, the individual should be immediately withdrawn pending further enquiries.
- It is essential that SBS follow a consistent process for considering such disclosures and for making subsequent Judgements regarding an applicant's suitability for employment.
- The following key stages must occur in the process:
 - Positive disclosure should be passed to the Headteacher.
 - The Headteacher will do an initial assessment (and will seek Governors help if need be) of whether the offence(s) listed are sufficiently serious to cause concern. This assessment will be in accordance with the following checklist:
 - The seriousness and nature of the offence(s)
 - The nature of the appointment
 - Length of time since the offence(s) occurred
 - Number and pattern of offences
 - The applicant's age at the time
 - Any explanation of the circumstances that may have already been given

Concealment of offences at application stage

- If offences were not declared, this will automatically warrant an interview with the applicant.
- Judgements at this stage will often err on the side of caution.
- If the Headteacher recommends that the offence(s) is not sufficiently serious to warrant an interview, then the Headteacher should sign the decision to employ.
- If it is judged that an interview is necessary, this should be undertaken between the relevant Headteacher and the prospective employee. Another officer should be present, such as an appropriate senior manager or governor.
- The meeting is an essential part of the process, as it is necessary to verify that the information contained on the disclosure does indeed relate to the individual concerned. This verification must be sought prior to any Judgements being made. There have been occasions where DBS system errors have occurred and information supplied has been wrongly attributed to individuals.
- The disclosure should be discussed with the prospective employee. The discussion will aid the decision-making process, and should be again broadly focus around the following:
 - The seriousness and nature of the offence(s)
 - The nature of the appointment
 - Length of time since the offence(s) occurred

- Number and pattern of offences
- The applicant's age at the time, circumstances/explanation
- Concealment of offences at application stage
- Based upon the findings at the interview, the Headteacher will undertake a risk assessment with regard to the suitability of the employee.
- The Headteacher should not take the decision in isolation, but will be accountable for it. There should be a clear record made of the decision, bearing the Judgement and signature of the Headteacher. The Judgement should not contain details of the offences.

Start of Employment and Induction

All new employees will be provided with an induction programme which will cover all relevant matters of school policy including safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, child protection procedures, whistle blowing and guidance on safe working practices.

Adults working with children who are not employed directly by the school

Supply Staff

We will only use those agencies which operate a Safer Recruitment Policy and supply written confirmation that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed. We will carry out identity checks when the supply staff member arrives at school.

Any safeguarding concern or allegation relating to supply staff will be managed by the school in accordance with KCSIE and the school's allegations procedures. The school will liaise with the supplying agency but will not simply cease using the individual without ensuring that appropriate safeguarding enquiries, referrals and actions are considered.

Volunteers

The school will undertake a written assessment of the nature of each volunteer role and determine the appropriate safeguarding and vetting checks before the volunteer begins.

From 1 September 2026, the previous supervision exemption from regulated activity no longer applies. A volunteer who undertakes teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children frequently, on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight, may therefore be engaging in regulated activity whether or not they are supervised.

All volunteers who will engage in regulated activity must have an enhanced DBS check including children's barred list information before undertaking that regulated activity. It is a criminal offence for a barred individual to engage in regulated activity and for an organisation knowingly to permit this.

For volunteers whose activity does not amount to regulated activity, the school will determine whether an enhanced DBS check without barred list information, another level of check, supervision or other safeguarding arrangements are appropriate, taking account of the nature of the role and the level of contact with children.

Occasional volunteers, including parents or carers helping at occasional school or PTA events or on non-overnight day trips, will be subject to appropriate safeguarding arrangements based on the nature and frequency of their involvement.

Trainee Teachers and Students on placement

Appropriate safeguarding checks must be completed for trainee teachers and other students undertaking placements at the school. Where the individual is placed by a university, training provider or other organisation, the school will obtain written confirmation that the appropriate checks have been completed and will verify the individual's identity on arrival. Where Side by Side is responsible for carrying out the checks, these will be completed in accordance with KCSIE and the nature of the role.

Students on work experience

The school will assess the safeguarding arrangements required for work-experience placements in accordance with KCSIE, taking account of the age of the person undertaking work experience, the nature and frequency of their contact with children, whether any activity constitutes regulated activity, and the level of supervision in place. Appropriate checks will be undertaken where required.

Contractors e.g. site managers, repairers, cleaners etc. who do not have direct contact with children

We ensure that contractors or any employees of the contractor, working at the school have been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, if any such check is required. Those contractors who will work on site without supervision will be subject to a DBS check. SBS will request full details of DBS checks carried out on staff supplied through an agency and keep a record that checks have been verified, when and by whom. Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will be supervised if they will have contact with children. Where a self-employed person will work at the school, the school will determine the appropriate level of DBS check for the role. The school may obtain the check or, where the self-employed person has obtained their own eligible DBS check, request to see the original certificate and ensure that the check is at the level required for the work being undertaken. The individual's identity will be verified before they begin work.

The use of an agency or other third-party organisation does not remove the school's safeguarding responsibilities. The school will obtain written confirmation that the required recruitment and safeguarding checks have been completed by the supplying organisation and will satisfy itself that the person presenting for work is the same person on whom those checks were undertaken.

Visitors

The school receives a range of visitors, including education and health professionals, social workers, guest speakers, performers, contractors, family members and individuals attending school events. The school will assess what safeguarding arrangements are appropriate according to the purpose of the visit and the visitor's level of contact with pupils. Visitors will be appropriately identified, supervised where necessary and subject to relevant safeguarding procedures. The school will not request DBS checks where it does not have a legal entitlement to do so.

7. Duty to Refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service

The school recognises its legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the relevant conditions are met, including where an individual engaged in regulated activity has been removed from regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left, because they have harmed or pose a risk of harm to a child. This duty applies to relevant staff and volunteers. Where appropriate, the school will also consider whether referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency or another professional or regulatory body is required.

8.. Recording of Information

Offer of Employment by the Selection Panel

The offer of employment and acceptance by the candidate is binding on both parties, subject to satisfactory completion of the pre-employment checks and satisfactory references. The successful candidate will be informed, normally by offer letter, that the appointment is subject to satisfactory completion of these checks.

Personnel file and Single Central Record

Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate will be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of his/her employment with the school including:

- Application form – signed by the applicant
- Interview notes – including explanation of any gaps in the employment history
- References – minimum of two
- Proof of identity
- Proof of right to work in the UK, if applicable
- Proof of relevant academic qualifications
- Criminal Offence declaration, signed medication awareness form, health declaration, signed code of conduct/dress code, contact information form
- Evidence of DBS clearance, Barred List (where applicable) and Teacher Prohibition checks

- Offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment.

The school will maintain a Single Central Record of recruitment and vetting checks in accordance with KCSIE and the Independent School Standards. .

SBS and the Head Teacher together with the Safeguarding Lead work to ensure that the organisation maintains a culture of ongoing vigilance through its induction, supervision and management systems. Any course of concern will be rigorously followed up and considered in line with the Safeguarding and Allegations of Abuse against a member of staff policy.