



ALTRINCHAM PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures

Policy and Procedure

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This policy applies to Altrincham Preparatory School, including the EYFS. It is available to current and prospective parents upon request and is published on the School's website.

1. General

Altrincham Preparatory School ("the School") is committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the children and young people in its care. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority.

We are also committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment to all its members of staff. We recognise that, in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment.

The aims of our recruitment policy are as follows:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, disability or age;
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISSRs), the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2 September 2024) (KCSIE), Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006, the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- To ensure that we meet our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

All queries on the School's Application Form and recruitment process must be directed to the Headmaster.

An entry will be made on the Single Central Register for all current members of staff at the School, the Governing body and all individuals who work in regular contact with children including volunteers, supply staff and those employed as third parties.

The Governing Body, chaired by Mr Andrew Hill, Headmaster and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for the management of the School.

All checks will be made in advance of appointment or as soon as practicable after appointment.

2. Scope of this Policy

This policy refers and applies to staff directly recruited and employed by the School. In the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, staff are defined as:

Any person working at the School whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract, but does not include supply staff or a volunteer.

In the case of agency or contract workers, we should set out our safeguarding requirements in the contract between the organisation and the School and must obtain written confirmation from the agency or company that it has carried out the same checks as we would otherwise perform on any individual working at the School (or who will be providing education on the School's behalf, including through online delivery). We conduct identity checks on agency and contract workers on arrival in School and, in the case of agency workers (which includes supply staff), we must be provided with a copy of the appropriate level of DBS check for such staff.

We will check with the relevant supply agency that the required checks have been carried out (identity, enhanced disclosure – renewed every 3 years, right to work in the UK, barred list, prohibition, qualifications, overseas checks plus those checks set out in KCSIE as 'pre-employment' checks). The Single Central Record shows these checks have been made and we carry out our own identity check and has seen a copy of the disclosure (whether or not it discloses any information).

In respect of contractors, unchecked contractors will under no circumstances be allowed to work unsupervised in School. We will determine the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances.

Any staff who TUPE transfer into the School's staff will be required to undertake the statutory requirements with regard to safer recruitment checks.

If staff are transferred under TUPE (gap of three months or less and information complete) information will be passed to the new employer and a note made on the Single Central Record that details have been accepted under TUPE.

3. Application Form

We will only accept applications from candidates completing the relevant Application Form in full. CVs will not be accepted in substitution for completed Application Forms but are permitted to be submitted alongside an Application Form.

We will make candidates aware that all posts in the School involve some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post. Candidates for employed posts will receive a Job Description and Person Specification for the role applied for.

Checks will be made of previous employment history to ascertain satisfactory reasons for any gaps in employment. These checks will then be checked against references and any discrepancies discussed with the candidate.

The successful applicant will be required to complete a Disclosure Form from the Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") for the position and, where appropriate, a check of the Barred List will be undertaken. Any offer of employment will be conditional on obtaining such satisfactory checks. Additionally, successful applicants should be aware that they are required to notify us immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children. This includes any staff who are disqualified from childcare or registration.

The statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006" applies to those providing early years childcare or later years childcare, including before school and after school clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 AND to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.

We take our responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect their suitability to work with children must notify the Headmaster immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings they may receive.

Staff and/or successful candidates who are disqualified from childcare or registration may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such individuals may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed. Please speak to the Headmaster for more details.

If the candidate is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, we will ask their current employer about disciplinary offences, including disciplinary offences relating to children or young persons (whether the disciplinary sanction is current or time expired), and whether the candidate has been the subject of any child protection allegations or concerns and if so the outcome or any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. Any information about past disciplinary action or substantiated allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

If the candidate is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, we will ask the previous employer about those issues. Where neither the current nor previous employment has involved working with children, we will still ask the current employer about the candidate's suitability to work with children. Where the candidate has no previous employment history, we may request character references which may include references from the candidate's school or university.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal by the School if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

4. Invitation to Interview

We will shortlist applicants according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. At least two people will carry out the shortlisting exercise, consider any inconsistencies, look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them and explore all potential concerns. It is recommended best practice that at least one person on the appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training.

Online searches will be carried out at the shortlisting stage. An online search may help to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we may want to explore with an applicant at interview or prior to them commencing work. This forms part of our wider safeguarding due diligence which aims to prevent and/or deter individuals who may be unsuitable to work with children from working in a school environment.

In evaluating any online information for relevance we will use the following criteria:

- Whether the information is relevant to the position applied for;
- Whether the information is relevant to the applicant's suitability to work at the School or in an education setting;
- Whether the information could have an impact on our reputation (whether positive or negative);
- Whether the information calls into doubt the applicant's willingness or ability to uphold our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- The length of time since the information became publicly available and whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the information was published;
- Whether the information reveals a pattern of concerning behaviours; and
- The relevant circumstances and the explanation(s) offered by the applicant.

Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which their relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail. Where online searches are undertaken on shortlisted applicants, any relevant information generated will be provided to the interview panel for discussion at interview.

Shortlisted candidates should be asked to complete a self-declaration form in relation to their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records. Applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the application at the point of interview.

We will, where possible, obtain references prior to interview where possible. This allows any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and can be taken up with the candidate at interview.

All formal interviews will have a panel of at least two people chaired by the Headmaster or another designated senior member of staff. The Chair of Governors should chair the panel for the Head's appointment. The interviewers involved will be required to state any prior personal relationship or knowledge of any of the candidates and a judgement will be made by the Chair as to whether or not an interviewer should withdraw from the panel. Should the Chair have a conflict of interest, the Vice Chair shall decide whether the Chair should withdraw from the panel.

The interview will be conducted in person and the areas which it will explore will include suitability to work with children including where appropriate, any discussion of information shared by a candidate in their self-declaration form.

All candidates invited to interview must bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post (e.g. the original or certified copy of certificates, diplomas etc). Where originals or certified copies are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained by the candidate from the awarding body.

We request that all candidates invited to interview also bring with them:

1. A current driving licence including a photograph or a passport;
2. A utility bill or financial statement issued within the last three months showing the candidate's current name and address;
3. A full UK birth certificate;
4. Where appropriate any documentation evidencing a change of name;
5. Where applicable, proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK;
6. A suitable alternative document (in line with DBS documentation guidelines) when any of the above documents are not available.

Please note that originals of the above are necessary. Photocopies or certified copies are not sufficient.

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview should inform us of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

5. Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer to a successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- verification of their identity
- the School being satisfied that any information generated through online searches does not make them unsuitable to work at the School
- verification of their medical fitness for the role
- the receipt of at least two references (one of which must be from their most recent employer and / or their most recent employer for whom they worked with children) which we consider satisfactory. We may telephone referees in order to verify the reference they have provided. If we receive a factual reference i.e. one which contains only limited information about the candidate, additional references may be sought before the appointment can be confirmed.
- a check which confirms that they are not the subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the historic General Teaching Council for England before its abolition in March 2012. Teaching work is defined in the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 to encompass:
 - Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
 - Delivering and preparing lessons to pupils;
 - Assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and
 - Reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.
- Verification of a successful completion of a statutory induction period (for teaching posts – applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999);
- for candidates who have worked or been resident overseas, such further checks and confirmations as we may consider appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. This shall include the candidate providing us with a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which they have worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and/or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.
- any further checks which we deem necessary if they have lived or worked outside of the UK which will include an overseas criminal records check or certificate of good conduct and may include professional references
- the receipt of a completed self-declaration form confirming whether they are disqualified from providing childcare as set out in the statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006;
- a check which confirms that they are not the subject of a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which renders them unable or unsuitable to work at the School
- for candidates taking part in the management of the School, a check will be carried out under section 128 of the Independent Educational Provision in England (Prohibition on Participation in Management) Regulations 2014. This applies to all Governors and the Senior Leadership Team.
- verification of their right to work in the UK
- verification of professional qualifications (including Qualified Teacher Status, where appropriate) which we deem a requirement for the post, or which were otherwise cited in support of their application
- a clear check of the Children's Barred List; and
- the receipt of an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**) which we consider to be satisfactory.

It is our practice that a successful candidate must complete a pre-employment health questionnaire. The information contained in the questionnaire will then be held by us in strictest confidence and processed in accordance with the Recruitment Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role i.e. proposed workload, extra-curricular activities, layout of the School.

We are aware of our duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, considering medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

For applicants who are living overseas, or who have lived overseas previously, they may be required to provide additional information about their suitability to work at the School from the country (or countries) in which they have lived. The

School's policy is to request such information from each overseas country in which the applicant has lived for a period of three months or more in the previous five years.

When requesting such information the School has regard to relevant government guidance and will therefore always require the applicant to apply for a formal check from the country in question i.e. a criminal records check (or equivalent) or a certificate of good conduct.

The School recognises that formal checks are not available from some countries, that they can be significantly delayed or that a response may not be provided. In such circumstances the School will seek to obtain further information from the country in question, such as a reference from any employment undertaken in that country.

We may allow an applicant to commence work pending receipt of a formal check from a particular country if it has received a reference and/or letter of professional standing from that country and considers the applicant suitable to start work. Decisions on suitability will be based on all the information that has been obtained during the recruitment process. Unless expressly waived by us, continued employment will remain conditional upon us being provided with the outcome of the formal check and it being considered satisfactory.

If no information is available from a particular country we may allow an applicant to commence work if they are considered suitable based on all of the information that has been obtained during the recruitment process.

We will take proportionate risk based decisions on a person's suitability in these circumstances. All suitability assessments must be documented and retained on file

If the formal check is delayed and we are not satisfied about the applicant's suitability in the absence of that information, the applicant's proposed start date may be delayed until the formal check is received.

6. References

We will seek the references referred to in section 4 above for shortlisted candidates (including internal applicants) and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. References must be received by a senior person with appropriate authority. If the candidate does not wish us to take up references in advance of the interview, they should notify us at the time of applying.

We 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 been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated, or malicious should not be included in any reference.

We 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. We will verify all references. Where references are received electronically, we will ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

We 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.

7. Criminal Records Policy

We will refer to the Department for Education ('DfE') document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' ('KCSIE') and any amended version in carrying out the necessary required DBS checks.

We comply with the provisions of the DBS Code of Practice, a copy of which may be obtained on request, or accessed here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>.

There are limited circumstances where we will accept a check from another educational institution which are as follows:

This is where the new member of staff ('M') has worked in: –

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- (a) A school or a maintained school in England in a position which brought M regularly into contact with children or young persons;
- (b) A maintained school in England in a position to which M was appointed on or after May 2006 and which did not bring M regularly into contact with children or young persons; or
- (c) An institution within the further education sector in England or in a 16 to 19 Academy in a position which involved the provision of education or which brought M regularly into contact with children or young persons,

during a period which ended not more than three months before M's appointment.

In these circumstances we may apply for a disclosure but are not required to do so. A new, separate barred list check will be obtained.

Prior to May 2013 an enhanced disclosure contained details of all convictions on record (including those which are defined as "spent" under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974) together with details of any cautions, reprimands or warnings held on the Police National Computer. It could also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a chief police officer considered relevant to the role applied for at the School.

With effect from 29 May 2013 the DBS commenced the filtering and removal of certain specified information relating to old and minor criminal offences from all criminal records disclosures. The filtering rules developed by the DBS and the Home Office designate certain spent convictions and cautions as "protected". "Protected" convictions and cautions are not included in a DBS certificate and job applicants are not required to disclose them during the recruitment process. It is unlawful for an employer to take into account a conviction or caution that should not have been disclosed. If a protected conviction or caution is inadvertently disclosed to the School during the recruitment process it must be disregarded when making a recruitment decision.

A conviction will always be disclosable if it was imposed for a "specified offence" committed at any age. A caution issued for a "specified offence" committed over the age of 18 will always be disclosable. However, a caution issued for a "specified offence" committed under the age of 18 is never disclosable. "Specified offences" are usually of a serious violent or sexual nature, or are relevant for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The list of "specified offences" can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-list-of-offences-that-will-never-be-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>.

The filtering rules have recently been updated and work as follows:

For those aged 18 or over at the time of an offence

A spent criminal conviction for an offence committed in the United Kingdom when a person was over the age of 18 will not be disclosed in a DBS certificate (and does not have to be disclosed by the job applicant) if:

eleven years have elapsed since the date of the conviction;

it did not result in a custodial sentence; and

it was not imposed for a "specified offence".

A spent caution for an offence committed when a person was over the age of 18 will not be disclosed in a DBS certificate (and does not have to be disclosed by a job applicant) if:

(a) six years have elapsed since the date it was issued; and

(b) it was not issued for a "specified offence".

For those aged under 18 at the time of an offence

A spent conviction for an offence committed when a person was under the age of 18 will not be disclosed in a DBS certificate (and does not have to be disclosed by a job applicant) if:

(a) five and a half years have elapsed since the date of the conviction;

(b) it did not result in a custodial sentence; and

(c) it was not imposed for a "specified offence".

A caution issued for an offence committed when a person was under the age of 18 will never be disclosed in a DBS certificate (and does not have to be disclosed by a job applicant).

DBS Update Service

Where an applicant subscribes to the DBS Update Service the applicant must give consent to us to check there have not been changes since the issue of a disclosure certificate. A barred list check will still be required.

If disclosure is delayed

A short period of work is allowed under controlled conditions, at the Headmaster's discretion. However, if an 'enhanced disclosure' is delayed, the Headmaster may allow the member of staff to commence work:

- Without confirming the appointment;
- After a satisfactory check of the barred list if the person will be working in regulated activity and all other relevant checks (including any appropriate prohibition checks) having been completed satisfactorily;
- Provided that the DBS application has been made in advance;
- With appropriate safeguards taken (for example, loose supervision);
- Safeguards reviewed at least every two weeks by the Headmaster/Business Operations Manager and member of staff;
- The person in question is informed what these safeguards are; and
- It is recommended, but is not a requirement, that a note is added to the Single Central Record and evidence kept of the measures put in place.

8. Artificial Intelligence

We do not use artificial intelligence software as a decision making tool at any stage of the recruitment process, including in respect of external and internal applications and promotion proposals.

9. Retention, Security of Records and Data Protection Obligations

We are legally required to carry out the relevant pre-employment checks detailed in this policy. Staff and prospective staff will be required to provide certain information to us to enable us to carry out the checks that are applicable to their role. We will also be required to provide certain information to third parties, such as the Disclosure and Baring Service and the Teacher Regulation Agency. Failure to provide requested information may result in us not being able to meet our employment, safeguarding or legal obligations.

We will process personal information in accordance with its Staff Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy.

We will comply with our obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and our obligations under our Data Protection Policy. Copies of DBS certificates will not be retained for longer than 6 months.

Appendix 1

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

We will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. We make appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record this will not automatically bar them from employment within the School. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for us to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for us to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the School to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare under the statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006".

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. We will report the matter to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- we receive an application from a disqualified person
- we are provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application or
- we have serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, we will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question
- whether the conviction or caution is 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2020 (if yes, it will not be taken into account)
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters=
- in the case of disqualification from providing childcare, whether the applicant has or is able to obtain an Ofsted waiver from disqualification, and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is our normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is our normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is our normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving.

Appendix 2

Statement to be used in all recruitment advertisements

The School 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.

The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. School is therefore permitted to ask job applicants to declare all convictions and cautions on a self-declaration form in advance of attending an interview (including those which are "spent" unless they are "protected" under the DBS filtering rules) in order to assess their suitability to work with children.