



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.

The School is also committed to providing a supportive working environment to all its members of staff. The School recognises 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 the School's 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, religion or religious belief, pregnancy or maternity, sex, 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), the most up to date Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006, the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2015 updated on 1 April 2021) (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- To ensure that the School meets its 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 appoints the Headmaster to oversee 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

The Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures Policy and Procedure herewith 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, the School should set out their 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 the School 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). The School conducts identity checks on agency and contract workers on arrival in School and, in the case of agency workers which includes supply staff, the School must be provided with a copy of the appropriate level of DBS check for such staff.

The School will 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). The Single Central Register shows these checks have been made and the School carries out its 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. The School will determine the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances.

Any staff who transfer into the School's staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) 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 Register that details have been accepted under TUPE.

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 the School 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.

The School takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect his/her suitability to work with children must notify the Headmaster immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings he/she has or 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.

If the candidate is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, the School 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, the School will ask the previous employer about those issues. Where the current or previous employment has involved working with children, the School will still ask the current employer about the candidate's suitability to work with children. Where the candidate has no previous employment history, the School may request character references which may include references from the candidate's school or university.

3. Application Form

All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role.

The School 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.

The School will make candidates aware that all posts in the School involve 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 may then be checked against references and any discrepancies discussed with the candidate.

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

4.1 Shortlisting

The School 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 School policy that at least one person on the appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training.

4.2 Online Searches

Online searches will be carried out at the shortlisting stage or after an offer of employment has been made (but prior to work commencing). The School will not carry out online searches as part of its initial sift of applications. An online search may help to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the School may want to explore with an applicant at interview. This forms part of the School's 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.

The online searches the School carries out may include searches of internet search engines, websites and social media platforms. Applicants will be asked to provide details of their online profiles, including account names, social media and professional networking site handles and details of websites on which the applicant is featured or named. This information will be used to carry out online searches. Applicants are not required to provide passwords or to grant the School access to social media or professional networking account content that is not publicly available. However, if information (such as profile pictures and/or account bios) is publicly available when a social media or professional networking site account is locked and can therefore be viewed by the School, it may be taken into account as part of the online search.

The School will determine how it approaches online searches on a case by case basis. However, all applicants for a role at the School will be treated consistently with regard to online searches.

In carrying out online searches the School is looking for any publicly available information about an applicant that:

- May be relevant to their suitability to carry out the role for which they have applied;
- May be relevant to their suitability to work at the School or in an education setting;
- Is of a safeguarding nature; and/or
- May have an impact on the School's reputation (whether positive or negative)

Any information generated from online searches will be entered in an 'Online search: results record'. Where online searches are undertaken on shortlisted applicants any relevant information generated will be provided to the interview panel for discussion with shortlisted applicants at interview. Where online searches are undertaken on the successful applicant only relevant information generated will be discussed prior to employment commencing. All offers of employment will be conditional upon the School being satisfied that the successful applicant is suitable to work at the School in light of any information generated from online searches.

In evaluating any online information for relevance the School 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 the School's reputation (whether positive or negative);
- Whether the information calls into doubt the applicant's willingness or ability to uphold the School's 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.

For successful candidates, the School will retain information generated from online searches for the duration of the individual's employment and in accordance with its Information and Records Retention Policy after employment ends.

For unsuccessful candidates, the School retains the information generated from online searches for six months from the date on which they are informed their application was unsuccessful, after which it will be securely destroyed.

The School's Business Operations Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead will carry out online searches.

4.3 Self-Declaration

Shortlisted candidates will 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, normally requested by the Business Operations Manager.

4.4 References

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

The School will seek the references referred to 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 the School to take up references from their current employer in advance of the interview, they should notify the School at the time of applying.

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

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

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.

4.5 The Interview

All formal interviews will have a panel of at least two people chaired by the Headmaster or another designated senior member of staff. It is School policy that at least one person on the appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training. 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 of the interview panel 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, where possible, 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.

The School requests 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 the School 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:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the candidate entering into a contract incorporating the School's standard terms and conditions of employment
- 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 the School considers satisfactory. The School will telephone referees in order to verify the reference they have provided. If the School receives 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 of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency which renders them unable or unsuitable to work at the School
- for candidates for teaching positions who have worked as a teacher outside of the UK, evidence from the professional regulating authority of the teaching profession in each country in which they have worked as a teacher which confirms that they are not subject to any sanctions or restrictions and that there are no concerns over their suitability to work as a teacher.
- any further checks which the School deems 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 working in connection with early or later years provision for children under the age of eight
- 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 management positions a check which confirms that they are not the subject of a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which renders them unable or unsuitable to work at the School
- verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (for teaching posts – applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)
- verification of their right to work in the UK
- verification of professional qualifications which the School deems a requirement for the post, or which were otherwise cited in support of their application
- evidence of satisfactory medical fitness
- a clear check of the Children's Barred List; and
- the receipt of an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**) which the School considers to be satisfactory.

It is the School's practice that a successful candidate must complete a pre-employment health questionnaire. The information contained in the questionnaire will then be held by the School 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.

The School is aware of its 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 will be asked 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.

In addition, where an applicant for a teaching position has worked as a teacher outside of the UK, the School will ask the applicant to obtain from the professional regulating authority of the teaching profession in each country in which they have worked as a teacher, evidence which confirms that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on the applicant and that they are not aware of any reason why the applicant may be unsuitable to work as a teacher.

Sanctions and restrictions issued by the regulating authority of another country will not prevent a person from working as a teacher at the School. However, the School will take all relevant information into account in determining whether an applicant is suitable to work at the School.

The School 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 the School, continued employment will remain conditional upon the School being provided with the outcome of the formal check and it being considered satisfactory.

If no information is available from a particular country the School 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.

The School 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 the School is 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. Criminal Records Policy

The School 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.

The School complies 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 the School will accept a check from another educational institution which are as follows:

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

- (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 the school may apply for a disclosure but is not required to do so. A new, separate barred list check will be obtained.

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 the school 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 Register and evidence kept of the measures put in place.

7. Retention, Security of Records and Data Protection Obligations

The School is 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 the School to enable the School to carry out the checks that are applicable to their role. The School will also be required to provide certain information to third parties, such as the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teacher Regulation Agency. Failure to provide requested information may result in the School not being able to meet its employment, safeguarding or legal obligations.

The School will comply with its obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under its Data Protection Policy.

The School will comply with its data protection obligations in respect of the processing of criminal records information. More information on this is included in the Recruitment Privacy Notice and the Data Protection Policy.

Appendix 1

Policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

The School will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The School makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him/her 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 the School 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 the School 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. The School will report the matter to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- the School receives an application from a disqualified person
- is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application or
- the School has 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, the School 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 the School's 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 the School's 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 the School's normal policy to consider the applicant's driving record.

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 School may carry out online searches on shortlisted applicants and all applicants will be required to provide details of their online profile, including social media accounts, as part of their application.

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.