



VALENCE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Safer Recruitment Policy

Date:	May 2025
Date for review:	May 2027



Valence Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, supply, and volunteers to share this commitment.

Rationale

It is vital that Valence Primary School has in place and follows recruitment and selection procedures and other Human Resources Management processes that help deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

This policy has been drawn up with reference to DfE's guidance '*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 Part 3*'. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Everyone in the school is likely to be perceived by children as a safe and trustworthy person. Safer Recruitment and selection procedures apply not only to staff employed directly by the school. It includes those who will be seen as trustworthy and safe because of their presence in the school e.g., volunteers, visitors, students on placement and staff employed by contractors.

Contractors

The local Authority and the school must ensure the terms of any contract made that requires the contractor to employ staff to work with or provide services for children and requires the contractor to adopt and implement Safe Recruitment procedures. Contractors' compliance should be monitored.

Volunteers

Volunteers are also seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and safe recruitment measures must be adopted. This should include:

- conducting an informal interview to gauge the persons aptitude and suitability.
- undertaking a DBS check.
- seeking at least 2 references.

In some circumstances, where a volunteer's role will be 'one-off' e.g., accompanying a school trip or helping at a concert, fete or sporting venue, those kinds of measures would be impractical and unnecessary provided that the person is not to be left alone and unsupervised, by a member of staff, in charge of children.

Where volunteers recruited by another organisation work in school e.g., sports coaches from a local club, music service trainees, assurances must be obtained from that organisation that the person has been properly DBS checked and vetted.

Students on Placement

Evidence from the course provider must be obtained that the student is following the course or is required to complete a placement prior to starting and evidence of a satisfactory DBS check provided. For institutions which regularly place students in the school, assurances must be sought that safe recruitment practices have been followed including DBS checks.

Ensuring Safer Practices

Issues to do with safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children must be considered at every stage of the recruitment process. It requires careful planning and a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, analysing, and evaluating the information from and about applicants.

Main elements of the process include:

- **Advertisement.** Considering where the post is advertised and a safeguarding statement regarding the school practice.
- **Job Description.** Ensuring the job description refers to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as well as the main duties and responsibilities of the post.
- **Person Specification.** Ensuring that the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children.
- **Application Form.** A standardised application form will be used by all candidates for obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies. The Local Authority application form is used for this purpose. This includes an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants will be informed that appointment will be subject to a satisfactory DBS check being obtained.
- **Information pack for candidates.** This will include the application form, Application Declaration (Disclosure) form, the job description and person specification, relevant Local Authority, and school policies, as appropriate, and terms and conditions relating to the post.
- **Scrutinising and short-listing.** All applications will be scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies and to identify any gaps in employment.

CVs and incomplete applications will not be accepted. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment or questions arising from online checks should be explored. The reasons for a history of repeated changes in employment without any clear career or salary progression or a mid-career change to supply or temporary work also needs to be explored and verified. This information should be considered in making the decision whether to shortlist. For individuals seeking employment who do have a criminal record, careful consideration must be given to whether that record should prevent them from being appointed. However, some offences are of such a nature that they constitute an automatic bar from any posts within the school. For all other offences a risk assessment should be carried out.

- **References.** Written references will be sought to obtain objective information to support appointment decisions directly from the referee. Open references and testimonials and those provided by the candidate will not be accepted. References on all short-listed candidates including internal ones should ideally be obtained before interview so that issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview. In exceptional cases this may not be possible because of delays on the part of the referee or because the candidate strongly objects to his/her current employer being approached at this stage-however this needs careful scrutiny. A reference from a close relative or spouse is not deemed acceptable. At least one referee must be the candidate's current/most recent employer. Where there is no previous employer, two references will still be sought for professional attributes and character.
- **Interviews.** All Candidates should be requested to bring to interview documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy DBS requirements and documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post. Members of the interview panel should be appropriately trained and experienced to conduct the interview and have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment. Prior to the interview they should reach

a consensus about the required standard for the job for which they are appointing, agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification, and consider the issues to be explored with each candidate. The interview panel should agree a set of questions they will ask all candidates in relation to the requirements of the post, and the issues they will explore with each candidate based on the information provided in the candidate's application and references (if available). In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the post the panel should also explore/ask about:

- attitude towards and motivation to work with children and young people.
- Ability to support the school's agenda for safeguarding/promoting the welfare of children.
- Ability to & maintain appropriate relationships & boundaries with children/ young people.
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours.
- Attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.
- Gaps in the candidate's employment history.
- Establish candidate's mental and physical capacity to carry out their responsibilities.
- Explore discrepancies or arising concerns from information provided.
- Declaring anything in the light of the requirement for a DBS check.

Pre-appointment checks

Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks (*see Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2024*).

Valence will expect the following:

- the receipt of at least two satisfactory references,
- verification of the candidate's identity including their right to work in the UK
- a check of DfES List 99 and satisfactory DBS Disclosure.
- an online search (including social media) will be carried out on shortlisted candidates.
- verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- verification of qualifications
- verification of professional status where required (eg relevant NVQ, QTS etc)
- self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.
- Successful completion of a statutory induction period.

The school will seek advice from their HR department and follow relevant DBS guidance if a Disclosure reveals information that a candidate has not revealed as part of the selection process. All checks should be:

- confirmed in writing.
- documented and retained on the personnel file.
- followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

Where the candidate is found to be on List 99 or the DBS Disclosure shows s/he has been disqualified from working with children by a Court: or an applicant has provided false information in support of his/her application or there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children, the facts should be reported to the police and/or the DfES Safeguarding Operations Unit.

List 99 and DBS checks on Overseas Staff.

These should be completed on staff from overseas unless it is verified that the applicant has not previously lived in the UK. In cases where an applicant has worked or been resident overseas in the previous five years, where possible a check of the applicant's criminal record should be obtained from the relevant authority in that country. It is a requirement that overseas staff should provide the school with a "Certificate of Good Behaviour" from their local Police force of their country. In cases where a criminal record check is not possible particular care should be taken with the other required checks, especially

those of identity and qualifications, and to obtain satisfactory references. Where possible additional references should be sought, and references followed up by 'phone as well as letter.

Post Appointment Induction

For all newly appointed staff and volunteers there is an induction programme regardless of previous experience. The purpose of induction is to:

- provide safeguarding training and information about the school's policies and procedures.
- support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been appointed.
- confirm the conduct expected of staff within the school.
- provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their roles or responsibilities.
- enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- include information about policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g., child protection, behaviour, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention/restraint.
- ensure safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils in the school.
- inform staff and volunteers how and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised.
- share information about other relevant personnel procedures.

Continuing awareness

Post appointment, there is a need to monitor that the school's ways of working, policies and procedures are adhered to for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Procedures are in place (Child Protection policy, Complaints Procedure, Whistleblowing Policy) to enable concerns to be raised about what seems to be poor or unsafe practice by members of staff. These concerns and those expressed by children, parents and others are listened to and taken seriously.

Extended Schools Services

Where Extended Schools services or activities are provided directly under the supervision or management of school staff, the school's arrangements for appointments, recruitment and vetting checks and record keeping apply as do the school's arrangements for Child Protection.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, the Governing Body should ensure that there are clear lines of accountability and written agreements setting out responsibility for carrying out recruitment and vetting checks on staff and volunteers. The Governing Body should ensure that the responsible body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place regarding safeguarding children and child protection and arrangements made to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

Single Central Record

The school maintains a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks of the following people:

- All staff who are employed by the school.
- All long-term supply staff.
- Volunteers who have regular contact with children (this does not include parents who volunteer for a one-off activity e.g., accompanying a school trip)
- Governors who regularly come into school.
- People who provide specialist coaching or tuition (e.g., sports coaches).
- The single central record details whether the following have been checked, when and by whom:
 - Identity checks – requiring photo ID.
 - Qualification checks where these are legally required.
 - Checks of right to work in the U.K.
 - List 99 checks
 - DBS Enhanced Disclosure.

- Further overseas record checks where appropriate.

Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on their personnel file which consists of: application form; interview notes; new starter pack; safeguarding declaration; register of business interests; confidentiality declaration; acceptable use declaration; childcare disqualification declaration; emergency details; ID, pack for payroll; DBS notification; offer letter; contract, right to work (residence permit) if needed.