Safer Recruitment Policy

Ethos Statement

TAO Independent School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and requires all staff to share and demonstrate this commitment in every aspect of their work.

Purpose

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.
- Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.

The appointment of all employees will be made in accordance with the provisions of employment law and we will comply with the requirements of DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

We are committed to using disciplinary procedures that deal effectively with adults who fail to comply with the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures and practices, including referring any allegation of abuse against an adult working with children to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day of the allegation being made.

A referral will be made if an adult has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child.
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Equalities Legislation

TAO Independent School will comply with relevant equalities legislation, specifically:
• Equality Act 2010
• Employment Relations Act 1999
• Employment Rights Act 1996
• The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000
• The Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002
• The Agency Workers Regulations 2010

Roles and Responsibilities

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 checks have been carried out on staff.
- Promote the safety and well-being of children at every stage of this process.
- Ensure that at least one member of the interview panel has completed Safer Recruitment Training.

Advertising

Vacant posts will normally 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.

All advertisements for posts will include the following statements:

- *"TAO Independent School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff to share and demonstrate this commitment."*
- *"The successful candidate will have to meet the requirements of the person specification and will be subject to pre-employment checks, an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references."*

Use of External Recruitment Agencies

TAO Independent School may use external recruitment agencies (e.g., Stafflex, Huddersfield) to support advertising, shortlisting, and initial candidate sifting. Where

agencies are used, they operate solely as an additional screening layer and do not conduct final vetting or make appointment decisions. All applicants progressed by an agency remain subject to the school's full safer recruitment process.

The school retains complete responsibility for ensuring that all statutory pre-employment checks are completed, including identity verification, enhanced DBS, barred list check, right to work, qualifications, references, employment history, online checks, gap analysis, and Section 128 checks where applicable. No candidate will be appointed, offered employment, or allowed unsupervised access to pupils until the school's own safer recruitment checks are fully completed and recorded on the Single Central Record (SCR).

Agencies do not provide staff directly to the school and do not act as the employer. All appointments are made solely by TAO Independent School, under TAO contracts, policies, and safer recruitment procedures. The use of an agency serves to enhance, not replace, the school's rigorous safeguarding controls. The school will verify any information or checks provided by the agency and will document this verification as part of its evidence trail.

Reference Requests

References will be sought directly from the referee and, where necessary, they 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 their reasons for leaving.

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, including if they have been subject previously to any disciplinary procedures.
- Whether the referee has any reservations as to the candidate's suitability to work with children and young people (if so, TAO Independent 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).

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures and DBS clearance. References are the "property" of the school and strict confidentiality will be observed.

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Employer testimonials e.g. 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.

Interviews

Interviews will always be face-to-face. Telephone interviews may be used prior to inviting the candidate to a physical interview, and for context and information gathering, but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview.

The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how the candidate meets the requirement of the job description and the candidate will be assessed against all of the criteria for the post.

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.
- To explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the references obtained.
- To declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure. To demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

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. Under the Data Protection Act, applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Recruitment records are stored securely and retained for 6 months for unsuccessful candidates, in line with UK GDPR.

In accordance with KCSIE2026, the provision will ensure that one member of any interview panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment training.

The last stage will involve an information forum, in which the candidate has the opportunity to be involved in discussions about the school, any questions about the school, feedback in regards to the session delivered.

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.

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify a candidate's identity from current photo ID (originals) and proof of address (originals) except where, for exceptional reasons, none is available.

- Obtain or request a copy of an enhanced DBS certificate with a barred list information where the candidate will be engaging in regulated activity.

- 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 on the GOV.UK website).

- 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.

- Verify professional qualifications (original certificates), as appropriate.

In accordance with KCSIE 2026, an online search may be conducted on shortlisted candidates to identify publicly available information that may indicate suitability to work with children. Any relevant findings will be discussed at interview.

All checks will be:

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

Offer of Employment

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

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Personnel File & Single Central Record (SCR)

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

- References, a minimum of two.
- Proof of identity.
- Proof of right to work in the UK (where applicable).
- Proof of relevant academic and outdoor qualifications.
- Evidence of DBS clearance, Barred List (where applicable).

TAO Independent School will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) of employment checks in accordance with DfE guidance. The SCR includes checks for identity, right to

work, enhanced DBS with barred list, professional qualifications, and Safer Recruitment training where applicable.

Start of Employment & Induction

The pre-employment checks listed above must be completed before the employee starts work. All new employees will be provided with an induction programme which will cover all relevant matters of the school's policy including safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, child protection procedures, whistle blowing and guidance on safe working practices, day to day operating procedures, incident management, four phased intervention programme, recording and monitoring.

The induction process will also contain a short session delivered by the candidate, this will cover their ability to provide a safe, progressive session to young people with complex SEND.

A 6-month probation period is in place for all new staff, with regular safeguarding reviews to assess ongoing suitability.

Students on Placement

When volunteers are working in the school as part of a recognised training course (e.g. PGCE, NVQ), references will not be required. However, we will require proof of DBS enhanced clearance with barred list check and will carry out identity checks when the student arrives at the school.

Students on Work Experience

Students on work experience will always be supervised.

Unsuitable Candidates

Candidates who are not appointed will be notified appropriately.

Contractors

We ensure that contractors, or any employee of the contractor, working at the school have been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, if any such check is required.

Contractors and their employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken will be supervised if they will have contact with children. If a contractor working at the school is self-employed and will be in regulated activity, we will consider obtaining the DBS check, as self-employed people are not able to make an application directly to the DBS. We will check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to legislation and statutory guidance.

Concerns

Any concern arising during recruitment will be considered and investigated as appropriate before an appointment decision is made.

Concerns regarding existing staff are managed in accordance with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

Legal Framework & Review

This policy has been developed with reference to the following legislation and guidance:

- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (as amended) – Part 4
- Equality Act 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

Version Updates

Version	Date	Author	Review / Changes	Approved By
1.0	01/10/2025	Daniel Giblin	Published	Headteacher / Proprietor
2.0	02/09/2026	Daniel Giblin		

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