



Safer Recruitment Policy

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0. Document Control

The table below contains the changes made between the different final editions of this document set for approval. This is to help provide information to those reviewing and approving the document of the changes being made.

Document Edition	Section	Details of change
October 2025	All Sections	<p>Full policy review, formatting.</p> <p>Aligned with KCSIE 2025 revisions - clarified agency/supply staff vetting, separate barred-list checks, Section 128 routes, online search proportionality, and updated SCR recording requirements. No new statutory checks introduced.</p> <p>Pupil Interview Panel Protocol (Appendix C)</p> <p>Early years foundation stage(EYFS) statutory framework 2025</p>

1. Policy Statement

Gatehouse School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment. The purpose of this policy is to set out the School's recruitment and selection procedures to ensure all appointments are made safely, fairly and in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.

This policy complies with:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)**
- **Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework 2025**
- **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (Part 4)**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006**
- **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975)**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR**

All job advertisements will include a safeguarding statement confirming the requirement for an enhanced DBS check and commitment to child welfare.

2. Scope

Applies to all employees, governors, contractors, agency/supply staff, trainees, and volunteers engaged in work with pupils.

3. Safer Recruitment Principles

- All recruitment and selection decisions place the safeguarding and welfare of pupils as the highest priority.
- Every interview panel will include at least one member with current **Safer Recruitment training**, renewed every two years.
- Recruitment will comply with the School's **Equal Opportunities Policy** and **Data Protection Policy**.
- Employment history and references will be reviewed carefully, and any gaps or anomalies will be explored during the interview process and recorded.

4. Interview and Selection Process

To implement the principles above, Gatehouse School follows a structured and consistent approach to candidate interviews and selection.

4.1 Formal Interviews

- Interview panels assess each candidate's experience, professional competence, values, and understanding of safeguarding in line with safer recruitment guidance.
- Questions explore motivation for working with children, maintaining professional boundaries, and responding to safeguarding concerns.
- Gaps in employment or discrepancies in references are discussed and recorded.
- Additional selection activities (e.g. teaching observation, pupil activity, or presentation) may be included where relevant to the role.

4.2 Pupil Interview Panels

- To reflect the school's commitment to pupil voice and community engagement, shortlisted candidates may meet a small, supervised pupil panel following the formal interview.
- The panel is supervised at all times by a safeguarding-trained member of staff.
- Pupils ask pre-approved questions about learning, inclusion, and school life.
- Pupil feedback is qualitative and forms part of the overall assessment but does not determine the recruitment outcome.
- This process follows the **Pupil Interview Panel Protocol (Appendix C)**.

5. Pre-employment Checks

All offers of employment are conditional on completion of the following checks:

- **Identity** - verified from original documents and photo ID. Digital right-to-work checks (IDVT) may be used in line with Home Office guidance.
- **Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check** for regulated activity.
- **Children's Barred List** check (via DBS) – where the role involves regulated activity.
- **Prohibition from Teaching**
- **Disqualification**

5.1 EYFS Compliance (Independent Schools under ISI)

This section sets out how the School ensures that all recruitment, employment, and ongoing suitability arrangements for staff working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comply with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025, the Childcare Act 2006, the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018, and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025.

The school will ensure that all persons employed or engaged to work in, or directly concerned with the management of, early-years (i.e., children from birth until 1 September following their fifth birthday) or later years (if applicable) childcare provision are suitable persons in line with the EYFS framework (Paragraphs 3.13-3.19).

The school will obtain and verify the following before employment commences:

- a minimum of two references, one being from the applicant's most recent employer or, if the applicant has not worked with children, from the current employer/training provider; the references must specifically confirm the applicant's suitability to work with children and disclose any safeguarding concerns.
- identity verification and right-to-work checks;
- enhanced criminal records checks (DBS) and barred-list checks, where applicable;
- where relevant, checks for overseas criminal records (if the applicant has lived/worked abroad).
- The school will maintain a clear record of all recruitment checks and vetting processes, including the DBS certificate reference number, date of issue, and the staff member who obtained the check. (See EYFS Paragraph 3.18).
- The school will ensure that no person who is **disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 (or by virtue of those regulations)** is employed in connection with the early years or later years childcare provision or takes part in its management.

The school will review its safer recruitment policy annually (or more frequently if required) and ensure that all relevant staff understand their obligations under the EYFS framework and relevant statutory guidance.

5.2 Checklist Items for Recruitment Process

- The job description and person specification include safeguarding responsibilities and the requirement for suitability.
- The application form includes a declaration of any convictions/cautions and a statement of truth.

- Two references were obtained, one from the most recent employer/training provider; the references include a statement of suitability to work with children.
- Verify identity (passport/visa/driver's license) and right to work in the UK.
- Enhanced DBS check (and barred list check if appropriate) before the start date or as soon as feasible.
- Overseas checks (if the applicant has lived/worked abroad).
- Qualification verification (applicant holds required level or is progressing via EBR).
- A statement of disqualification under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations—staff complete a declaration.
- Record-keeping of all checks: date, who completed the check, outcome, and reference number.
- Induction includes safeguarding, child protection, the role of the DSL, and the policy on suitability of staff.
- Ongoing suitability: annual declaration by staff, supervision, and evaluation of continuing suitability.

All staff, volunteers, and other adults who work directly with children under the age of eight, or who manage such provision, are required to declare that they are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018.

Where applicable, the school will undertake disqualification checks in addition to enhanced DBS and barred list checks prior to appointment and will keep a written record of the outcome of these checks.

5.3 Notification of Significant Events

In line with paragraphs 3.23–3.25 of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025, the School will notify the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) (as its regulatory body) without delay of any significant event that is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children or who works or lives on the premises where childcare is provided.

Examples of significant events include, but are not limited to:

- The disqualification of an employee or volunteer;
- The conviction or caution of any person living or working on the premises; or
- Any safeguarding concern that may call into question a person's suitability to work with children.

Where necessary, the ISI will inform the Department for Education (DfE) and/or other statutory agencies as appropriate.

The School will notify the Local Authority/LADO separately if the event is a serious safeguarding issue.

5.4 Reporting Timelines

The school will notify ISI as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case within 14 days of becoming aware of a matter that requires notification.

5.5 Ongoing Monitoring

All staff are required to inform the Head and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately of any circumstances that may affect their continued suitability to work with children.

Periodic rechecks and annual declarations of ongoing suitability may be undertaken as part of the school's safer recruitment procedures.

5.6 Legal and Regulatory References

This policy section should be read alongside:

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)
- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Independent School Standards Regulations (2014, as amended)
- ISI Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements (latest edition)
 - Section 128 Prohibition from Management Check—for members of the governing body, senior leaders, and others in management roles.
 - Right to Work in the UK verification.
 - Professional qualifications.

5.7 Verification of Employment, Qualifications, and References

This section sets out the School's procedures for verifying the identity, qualifications, employment history, and suitability of all staff, volunteers, and students working with children, in line with the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), KCSIE 2025, and Independent School Standards Regulations (2014, as amended).

Right to Work in the UK

All applicants must provide evidence of their legal right to work in the United Kingdom. The School will verify this prior to employment and retain appropriate records as part of safer recruitment checks.

Professional Qualifications

Where required for the role, the School will verify professional and academic qualifications prior to appointment, ensuring that qualifications are genuine and appropriate for the position.

References

The School will obtain two references for all staff, students, and volunteers before appointment wherever practicable, including a reference from the most recent employer.

References must meet the following standards:

- Not accept open references (e.g., “To Whom It May Concern”).
- Not rely on applicants to obtain their own references.
- Obtain references from a current or most recent employer, training provider, or education setting, completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (e.g., the Headteacher).
- Not accept references from family members.
- Verify relevant previous employment, including the applicant’s last period of working with children. If the applicant has never worked with children, a reference should come from their current employer, training provider, or education setting.
- Ensure electronic references are legitimate and originate from verifiable sources.
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague, inconsistent, or incomplete.
- Compare application form information with references and address any discrepancies with the applicant.
- Establish reasons for leaving previous posts and ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

Reference Content

References should confirm the applicant’s suitability to work with children and provide factual information regarding any substantiated safeguarding concerns or allegations that meet the harm threshold. References must not include information about concerns or allegations that are unsubstantiated, unfounded, false, or malicious.

The School will also provide references for previous employees in a timely manner upon request, following the same principles.

Legal and Regulatory References

- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)
- Independent School Standards Regulations (2014, as amended)
- Childcare Act 2006

5.7 English Language Skills

This section sets out how the School ensures that all staff working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) have **sufficient proficiency in English** to safeguard children's welfare and meet statutory requirements, in line with the **EYFS Statutory Framework (2025)** and **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)**.

5.7.1 Requirement for English Language Skills

The School will ensure that all staff, volunteers, and other adults working directly with children, or involved in their management, have an **adequate understanding and use of English** to safeguard the well-being of children and carry out their duties effectively.

This includes the ability to:

- **Keep accurate records** in English (for example, observation notes, accident records, and care plans).
- **Communicate and liaise** with colleagues, parents, and external agencies in English.
- **Summon emergency help** when required.
- **Understand and follow instructions**, particularly regarding safeguarding, medication administration, food hygiene, and health and safety.
- **Recruitment and Assessment**

During recruitment, the School will:

- Assess applicants' **spoken and written English skills** relevant to their role.
- Verify that staff can **communicate effectively with children, parents, and colleagues**.
- Ensure staff have sufficient language skills to **follow statutory guidance** and respond appropriately in emergency or safeguarding situations.
- Where necessary, additional support or training may be provided to enable staff to meet these requirements.

Ongoing Monitoring

The School will monitor English language proficiency as part of **induction, appraisal, and ongoing professional development**, ensuring that staff continue to meet the required standard throughout their employment.

Legal and Regulatory References

- *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2025)*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)*

- *Independent School Standards Regulations* (2014, as amended)
- *Childcare Act 2006*

5.8 Medical Fitness

In line with the Independent School Standards and the Equality Act 2010, all staff must complete a post-offer **Medical Fitness Declaration** confirming their ability to carry out their role. This is reviewed confidentially by the School Nurse or HR. Reasonable adjustments are agreed where needed. No health questions are asked before an offer except to facilitate reasonable adjustments.

6. Appointments Pending DBS Certificate

In exceptional circumstances, a new employee may start work before receipt of their enhanced DBS certificate **only** where:

- the role has been risk-assessed;
- a **separate children's barred list check** (for regulated activity) has been obtained; and
- the individual is **supervised at all times** pending the DBS results.

This decision will be recorded and authorised by the Headteacher.

7. Volunteers, Contractors and Agency Staff

- **Regular volunteers** in regulated activity: enhanced DBS and barred list check.
- **Supervised volunteers not in regulated activity**: enhanced DBS (no barred list) as appropriate.
- **Contractors**: those in regular contact with children will require an enhanced DBS; contractors on site during school hours but not in regular contact will be supervised and their identity verified at reception.
- **Agency or third-party staff**: the School will obtain written confirmation from the employing organisation that all required checks have been completed. Identity will be verified on arrival and recorded on the SCR.

8. Trainee Teachers and Work Placements

Where trainee teachers or students on placement are employed by a training provider, the School will obtain written confirmation from the provider that all

pre-employment checks have been completed. Verification of identity and safeguarding induction will be undertaken by the School on arrival.

9. Governors and Proprietors

All members of the governing body and proprietors of the School are subject to:

- An **enhanced DBS check** (without barred list unless in regulated activity);
- A **Section 128 check** confirming they are not prohibited from management;
- Identity and right-to-work verification;
- These checks are recorded on the SCR.

10. Probation and Ongoing Supervision

All new staff serve a probationary period during which their conduct, safeguarding understanding, and suitability are monitored through supervision meetings. Any concerns are reported to the DSL and HR for review.

11. Single Central Record (SCR)

The School maintains an SCR in line with **KCSIE 2025**. Entries include (as applicable):

- Identity verification.
- Children's barred list check / date.
- Enhanced DBS certificate / date / reference number.
- Prohibition from teaching check.
- Section 128 prohibition from management check.
- Overseas checks / letters of professional standing.
- Professional qualification verification.
- Right to work check / date.
- Name of person completing each check and date completed.

The SCR covers **employees, agency staff, regular volunteers, trainees, governors/proprietors, and contractors** with regular pupil contact.

12. References

- Sought directly from referees using the School's safer-recruitment template.
- References must comment on the candidate's suitability to work with children and will be verified by telephone if necessary.
- Any employment gaps are explored and recorded at interview.

13. Online Searches

The School conducts online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence (**KCSIE, 2025**). Searches are proportionate, limited to publicly available information relevant to safeguarding, and outcomes are recorded. Candidates are informed of this requirement in advance.

14. Induction of New Staff

On or before a new staff member's first day, they will receive and acknowledge:

- The DfE publication "**Keeping Children Safe in Education**" (latest version, including Annex A or B as applicable).
- The School's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.
- The School's **Whistleblowing Policy**.
- The School's **Staff Code of Conduct**.
- The School's **Behaviour Policy** and relevant safeguarding addenda.

The DSL or Deputy DSL ensures induction covers safeguarding roles, responsibilities, and how to report concerns.

15. Data Protection

All personal data relating to recruitment is processed lawfully under **UK GDPR Article 6(1)(c)** (legal obligation) and **Article 9(2)(b)** (employment, social security and social protection). Data is retained only as long as necessary for safeguarding and employment purposes.

Recruitment documentation is retained for six months after appointment; SCR records are retained securely for the duration of employment plus six years post-departure.

16. Ongoing Vigilance

Staff must immediately disclose any relevant changes (e.g. criminal charges) during employment. The School may undertake additional DBS checks where concerns arise or on a risk-assessed basis; routine 3-year re-checks are not mandated.

17. Training

All individuals involved in recruitment complete recognised **Safer Recruitment training**. The School keeps a record of training dates.

18. Monitoring and Review

The Bursar (HR Lead) and Headteacher monitor compliance with this policy and report annually to the Governors' Safeguarding Committee.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Appendix A: SCR Compliance Checks

Check Type	Applies to	Verification Method	Recorded By	Date Completed	Notes / Reference
Identity	All staff, volunteers, contractors, governors	Original documents or IDVT (Home Office approved)	HR / Bursar		
Barred List	Roles involving regulated activity	Via DBS check (Children's Barred List)	HR		
Enhanced DBS	All staff in regulated activity	Enhanced certificate – copy of number & date only	HR		
Prohibition from Teaching	Teachers (QTS or unqualified)	Teacher Services (TRA)	HR		
Section 128	Governors, senior leaders, managers	Teacher Services or DBS 'management' check	HR		
Overseas Police / Standing	Anyone living/working overseas	Overseas police or Letter of Professional Standing	HR		
Qualifications	Where job requires	Certificates verified	HR		
Right to Work	All employees	Passport / visa check	HR		
References	All employees	Written + verbal verification	HR		
Medical Fitness	All employees	Post-offer declaration	HR / Nurse		
Online Search	All shortlisted	Open-source review	HR		

Record Retention: Recruitment documentation is retained for six months after appointment; SCR records retained securely for duration of employment + six years post-departure.

Review: Appendix reviewed annually alongside SCR audit.

Appendix B: Optional Enhancements and Best Practice Additions

The following elements are not statutory requirements but demonstrate the School's commitment to best practice in safer recruitment and equality.

1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment (Good Practice)

Gatehouse School collects and monitors anonymised data regarding applicants' characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, disability) to ensure recruitment procedures promote equality of opportunity and identify any trends that require action. Data is processed in accordance with the **Equality Act 2010** and **UK GDPR** principles.

2. Interview and Safeguarding Question Records

Interview panels retain structured notes and responses to standard safeguarding questions for a minimum of six months post-appointment. These records support safer decision-making, internal review and compliance with inspection standards.

3. Agency Supply and Peripatetic Staff

Written assurance is obtained from agencies that all required vetting checks have been completed (statutory). The School also verifies the individual's identity and confirms their safeguarding awareness on arrival (best practice). All details are logged on the Single Central Record.

4. Whistleblowing Cross-Reference

Concerns about recruitment processes or safeguarding in hiring should be reported under the School's **Whistleblowing Policy**. This ensures transparency and accountability in all staffing decisions.

Appendix C: Pupil Interview Panel Protocol

Purpose

Gatehouse School values the voice of its pupils in shaping our community. As part of our safer recruitment culture, we may invite a small group of pupils to meet shortlisted candidates for a teacher's position following formal interviews. This process helps pupils understand recruitment responsibly and gives leaders insight into how candidates interact with children in a safe, professional context.

1. Principles

- Pupil involvement reflects the School's ethos of participation, respect, and collaboration.
- Panels are **supervised at all times** by a designated member of staff (usually the DSL, Deputy DSL, or HR Lead).
- Pupils are **never involved in recruitment decisions**, but their impressions contribute to the overall picture of a candidate's suitability and fit with the school culture.
- All interactions take place in a **safe, transparent environment** (open room, staff present).
- Questions are pre-approved and focus on **teaching style, ethos, and relationships**, not personal or confidential matters.

2. Composition

- **2–4 pupils** drawn from the School Council, Head Pupils, or House Captains.
- **Staff facilitator** (must hold safeguarding training).
- Pupils receive a **short briefing** explaining their role: to represent the student body respectfully and provide fair, honest feedback.

3. Timing and Format

- The pupil panel occurs **after** the candidate's formal interview.
- Duration: **15–20 minutes** maximum.
- Format:
 - Staff facilitator welcomes candidate and pupils.
 - Pupils introduce themselves and ask pre-agreed questions.
 - Candidate answers and may ask brief questions about the school.
 - Pupils thank the candidate and record their feedback privately afterwards.

4. Safeguarding Arrangements

- The meeting takes place **in a public or glass-panelled room** on school premises.
- **A member of staff remains present** throughout.
- Pupils' written feedback is **collected by the facilitator** and shared with the Headteacher or panel chair only.
- Feedback is **qualitative**, not scored, and should never include personal comments about appearance, accent, or background.

5. Feedback Recording

Pupils complete a short form with prompts such as:

- What was your general impression of the candidate?
- How do you think they would make lessons enjoyable and inclusive?
- Did they seem interested in pupils' ideas and school life?
- Is there anything that stood out (positively or negatively)?

The facilitator summarises key points for the recruitment file.

6. Example Questions for Pupils

Below are sample pre-approved questions for guidance:

About Teaching and Learning

- What do you enjoy most about teaching children our age?
- How would you make sure lessons are fun but still help us learn?
- How do you help pupils who find something tricky?

About Relationships and Behaviour

- How would you help pupils who don't get along work together?
- What does respect look like in your classroom?
- How do you make sure everyone feels included and listened to?

About Gatehouse and School Life

- Why do you want to work at Gatehouse School?
- What's one idea you'd bring to make our school even better?
- What do you think makes a great Gatehouse teacher?

7. Confidentiality

Pupils and candidates are reminded that the discussion is confidential and must not be shared with others. All notes are stored securely and destroyed after the recruitment decision is finalised.

8. Review

This protocol is reviewed annually alongside the Safer Recruitment Policy and DSL safeguarding procedures.