



Safer Recruitment Policy

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1. Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in education. This Footsteps is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the students in its care and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

2. Scope and objectives

The scope of this policy is to set out the minimum requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- Attract the best possible applicants to vacancies on the basis of their merit, abilities and suitability;
- Deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- Identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people.

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

- To ensure that all applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- To ensure that no applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds and specifically any protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010;
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE), the Safer Recruitment Consortium, the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS);
- To ensure that the Footsteps meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Board of Footsteps Trustees

- To ensure the Footsteps has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of staff and volunteers in accordance with the DfE guidance and legal requirements;
- To monitor compliance with the above policies.

Principal/Recruitment Team

- To ensure the Footsteps operates safe recruitment practices and makes sure appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers;
- To monitor contractor compliance with this policy;
- To promote the safeguarding of children and young people at every stage of the recruitment process.

4. Advertising and application Forms

All adverts for vacancies should be written to appeal to all sections of the community and be clear and concise. They should include a brief overview of the role, the safeguarding requirements of the role (if relevant), person specification, specify the length of contract (identify as a maternity cover if this is the case) and include a description of the school and Footsteps.

Adverts must always contain a reference to the requirement for an enhanced DBS check and our commitment to child protection e.g. “the Footsteps is committed to the safeguarding and welfare of children and applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to this post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Please note that this role is ‘exempt’ from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore, if shortlisted, you will be required to declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that are not ‘protected’ (i.e. filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013). It is an offence to apply for this role if you are barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.”

All prospective applicants must fully complete an application form. CVs will not be accepted in isolation.

5. Recruitment Panels and Shortlisting

In accordance with KCSIE, Footsteps will ensure that at least one member of any interview panel has undertaken Safer Recruitment training and kept this training up to date.

Each recruitment panel member should complete their own independent shortlisting exercise to review each applicants’ experience/skill/qualification against the selection criteria specified in the original Person Specification. Applications need to be reviewed in a fair and unbiased manner and a record of the review process should be kept. Selection Panel members should challenge each other where there is a difference in opinion.

Feedback on the outcomes of shortlisting will be shared with applicants by the HR team. Where a candidate asks for more detailed feedback, any notes kept by the Selection Panel should be used to provide that.

6. Interviews

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post and may include a variety of methods such as panel interviews, teaching, lesson observations, written or oral exercise, data exercise.

Footsteps will conduct interviews in a face-to face manner (which could be via remote methods using video conferencing software, such as Microsoft Teams or similar, if face to face is not practical). Telephone interviews may be used at the short-listing stage.

Shortlisted candidates will be sent:

- Childcare Disqualification Declaration form (where applicable).
- Criminal Record Self-Declaration form (see section X below!)

Candidates will be required to:

- Give a satisfactory explanation of any gaps in employment;
- Provide a satisfactory explanation of any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to recruiters;
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS check (via the self-declaration form);
- Provide a childcare disqualification declaration form if and when required;
- Demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people;
- Demonstrate how they meet the job description and person specification;
- All applicants who are invited to interview will be asked to bring original evidence of their identity, address, right to work in the UK and relevant qualifications.

All shortlisting and interview notes (paper and electronic) should be forwarded to the HR team for secure storage. No notes or paperwork should be kept by recruitment panel members. All notes will be destroyed securely six months after the end of the recruitment activity.

7. Criminal Record Self-Declaration Forms for Shortlisted Candidates

If shortlisted, candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration where they will be required to declare all unspent cautions and convictions and also any adult cautions (simple or conditional) and spent convictions that are not protected as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2020). The relevant self-declaration form is attached at Appendix 2.

The Footsteps may prevent an applicant from attending interview if the requisite declaration is not returned ahead of an interview.

Ahead of the interview, the HR department will analyse all the Application Forms to ensure a complete career/education history; any gaps, omissions or anomalies will be discussed with the candidate at interview. Any declarations on the self-declaration form will also be discussed with the candidate at interview.

8. Pre-Employment Checks

Any offer of appointment made to a successful candidate, including anyone who has lived or worked abroad, must be **conditional** on the satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. The Footsteps will:

- Verify the candidate's identity. Identification checking guidelines can be found on the [Gov.uk website](#);
- Verify the candidate's right to work in the UK. Advice on this can be found on the [Gov.uk website](#);
- Obtain an enhanced Children's Workforce DBS certificate including barred list information for those who will be working in regulated activity and an Enhanced Children's Workforce DBS (without the barred list check) for anyone who is working in the school but is not working in regulated activity (see Appendix 1);
- Obtain a standalone barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available. The school will also carry out a risk assessment if candidates will be starting work prior to a DBS certificate being available;
- Ensure all shortlisted candidates have completed a Criminal Record self-declaration form disclosing any relevant convictions (see Appendix 2);
- If the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the Footsteps feels appropriate which would include an overseas police check;
- Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish that they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role;
- Verify professional qualifications as appropriate by viewing original certificates. The Teacher Services system should be used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS) and the completion of teacher induction or probation;
- Ensure the candidate is checked against the prohibition from teaching orders;
- Ensure the candidate is checked against the prohibition from management roles (section 128) check where applicable;
- Ensure the candidate completes a childcare disqualification declaration (where appropriate).

Further information on the pre-employment checks is below.

8.1 Proof of identity and right to work in the UK

All candidates will need to prove their identity and right to work in the UK via appropriate photographic ID. Good quality photocopies of all documents will be taken at the interview stage. These will then be signed and dated by the person who has evidenced the originals and the copy should state "*Originals seen and identity confirmed.*"

Post-interview, for successful candidates all documents will be stored securely on the employee file for audit and inspection purposes, and any subsequent risk assessments. For unsuccessful Candidates, all ID documents should be destroyed securely at the first available opportunity but no later than 6 months after the recruitment process has been concluded.

8.2 DBS checks

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 all positions within the Footsteps are exempt. Therefore, Footsteps is entitled to carry out Enhanced Disclosure checks for all staff working in regulated activity (including Governors) and Standard Disclosures on those in unregulated activity. The Footsteps will make this clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post.

If an applicant has joined the Online Update Service, Footsteps will complete an online check subject to the applicant returning the relevant authorisation form and an authorised employee of the school having had sight of the original Certificate. Footsteps will also need to complete a check of the Standalone Children's Barred List (for roles in regulated activity).

Should a DBS Certificate be returned with details of a conviction/caution/reprimand/warning/non-conviction information if deemed relevant by the Police, a full risk assessment (see Appendix A) should be completed. The risk assessment will include consideration of whether the conviction etc had been disclosed earlier during the recruitment process, if anything had been deliberately withheld, a review of the wider context of the conviction etc, any remorse shown by the applicant and any reasonable control measures that could be applied.

As an offer of appointment is conditional upon the receipt of a satisfactory DBS Certificate, the offer may be reasonably withdrawn, but only once a thorough risk assessment and review of the situation has been conducted.

Further information is available under the R19 Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.

8.3 Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in the Footsteps. In addition, the Footsteps will make any further checks so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

If a candidate has worked or lived abroad for more than three months in the seven years prior to taking up appointment, an overseas criminal records check (or equivalent) will be completed. Guidance can be sought via the Gov.uk website. The request will be made by the applicant and the expense will be borne by them. This is in addition to a DBS Criminal Records check. If the Criminal Record Check is not completed by the start date, they may begin work on a Supervision Order as per the guidance on Supervision Orders outlined above.

In addition, an overseas reference will be obtained and verified, where possible.

If an applicant has worked overseas, they should obtain a letter from the professional regulating authority confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions or that they are aware of any reason why the applicant may be unable to teach. Contact details of the regulatory bodies in the EU/EEA are available here or applicants can contact the UK Centre for Professional Qualifications

Restrictions imposed by another EEA regulating authority do not prevent a candidate from taking up teaching positions in England, the school will consider the circumstances that led to the restriction or sanction being imposed when considering a candidate's suitability for employment.

8.4 References

A minimum of two references will be taken up and at least one of the references will be obtained from the candidate's current or most recent employer and will be sought directly from the referee. Ideally references should be sought before the interview.

Footsteps will explore any discrepancy or gaps in employment identified through references during the interview where possible or, at least, before any offer of employment. This includes references for internal candidates.

If a candidate is moving from another school the reference must be from the Principal/Headteacher or another senior colleague (in the absence of a Principal) and not from a colleague.

Open references or testimonials provided by the candidate will not be accepted.

Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or email in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies and verify the source of the reference. This contact will then be recorded on the school's Single Central Record for successful candidates.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

Referees will always be asked specific questions about:

- The candidate's suitability for working with children and young people;
- Any disciplinary sanctions, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children;
- Any "live" disciplinary sanctions not relating to the safeguarding of children;
- The candidate's suitability for this post.

Candidates are not automatically entitled to see their employment references but may make a request to the HR department for a copy. For that reason, all referees will be advised that their reference may be shared with the prospective candidate upon request and they should advise if the reference is to be withheld.

8.5 Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

Candidates must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification required for the position and claimed in their application form.

8.6 Fitness to undertake the role

A confidential pre-employment health questionnaire must be completed to verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A successful candidate can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role **once an offer of employment has been made**. Confidential pre-employment checks will be carried out by the School's Occupational Health provider.

8.7 Secretary of State Prohibition Orders

In all cases, where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind (this may include non-teaching staff if they plan, prepare and deliver lessons and assess and report on students/pupils without supervision of a qualified teacher) a Prohibition Order check will be made via Teacher Services. It is anticipated that this will be performed at the shortlisting stage, but it will, in any case, be carried out before any offer of employment is made.

A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher or in a pupil-facing role.

8.8 Section 128 direction (management roles)

A Section 128 check (i.e. a "Prohibited from Management" check via Employer Access on Teacher Services) needs to be completed for candidates in management roles. This includes members of the Board of Footsteps Trustees, Senior Leadership Team roles, Teachers, Learning Mentors and Support Staff.

A Section 128 check will be completed as part of the pre-employment checking process.

8.9 Online searches

Footsteps will, where possible, complete an online search as part of the pre-employment checking process. The online search will be a search of records that are publicly available online such as LinkedIn or social media profiles. Any issues or incidents revealed during the check (e.g. concerns around safeguarding, suitability or incidents that could bring the Footsteps into disrepute) should be raised with the candidate during the checking stages. Candidates should be made aware of the check ahead of the interview - note that this is referenced on the standard interview template.

9. Single Central Record (SCR)

Footsteps will keep a Single Central Record of pre-employment checks, referred to in the Keeping Children Safe in Education Regulations as "the register" for Footsteps.

The Single Central Records for each school will include confirmation that the relevant checks have been carried out along with the date the check was undertaken/obtained for the following people:

- all staff (Teachers and Support Staff) directly employed to work at the Footsteps
- Teacher trainees, Contractors and third-party supply staff who work at the Footsteps.
- Trustees

10. Induction

Footsteps recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but must be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff.

All staff who are new to the Footsteps will receive induction training that will include the school's safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices including Child Protection, PREVENT, FGM awareness and online safety.

Regular meetings will be held during the first 6 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s).

11. Contractors and Agency Workers

Footsteps will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that they have carried out the requisite checks (including, where relevant, written notification confirming that a DBS certificate has been obtained) on an individual who will be working regularly onsite. The records of such checks will be held on the SCR.

Where the position requires a Barred List check, this will be obtained by the agency or third party prior to appointing the individual. The school will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

12. Volunteers

Under no circumstances will a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Footsteps will undertake a risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding whether to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity. A risk assessment as outlined in Volunteers Policy and associated guidance should be completed. When completing the risk assessment, Footsteps will consider:

- The nature of the work with children;

- What the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- Whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on suitability;
- Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check.

14. Appendix 1 – Regulated Activity

Regulated activity includes:

- a) Teaching, training, instructing, caring for (see (c) below) or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children.
- b) Work for a limited range of establishments (known as 'specified places', which include schools and colleges), with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers.

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly. Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of frequency or whether they are supervised or not. This includes:

- c) relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional:
 - personal care includes helping a child with eating and drinking for reasons of illness or disability or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing for reasons of age, illness or disability
 - health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.

15. Appendix 2 – Criminal Record Self-Declaration Form

If we have not received your completed form, we reserve the right to withdraw the offer of an interview. Should you have any questions relating to the completion of this form, please contact info@footstepstrust.com

NAME:		ROLE APPLIED FOR:	
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Footsteps is committed to the safeguarding and welfare of children. Applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to this post, including checks with past employers, overseas police check if necessary and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Please note that this role is 'exempt' from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore, you are required to declare any convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings that are not 'protected' (i.e. filtered out) as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013). Shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide details of all unspent convictions and those that would not be filtered, prior to the date of the interview.

Footsteps complies with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) code of practice, Keeping Children Safe in Education guidelines and has a written policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders.

As you have been shortlisted for interview, you are required to declare any relevant convictions, adult cautions or other matters which may affect your suitability to work with children. Please note that your declaration should include UK, overseas and armed forces convictions, cautions and relevant service discipline convictions where it would be considered an equivalent offence in England and Wales.

As a result of amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions order 1975) in 2013 and 2020, some minor offences are now protected (filtered) and should not be disclosed to potential employers, nor can employers take such offences into account.

If you are unsure whether you need to disclose criminal information, you should seek legal advice or you may wish to contact Nacro or Unlock for impartial advice. There is more information on filtering and protected offences on the Ministry of Justice website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/newguidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974>

Nacro: <https://www.nacro.org.uk/criminal-record-support-service/>

Telephone: 0300 123 1999 Email: helpline@nacro.org.uk

Unlock: <http://hub.unlock.org.uk/contact/>

Telephone: 01634 247350 Text: 07824 113848

Thank you for taking the time to answer the following questions:



SELF- DISCLOSURE FORM

You are being asked to complete this form because the role you are applying for is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in England, Scotland and Wales, or the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and involves contact with children or young people.

As the role you have applied for involves work with children, you will also be required to undergo the relevant vetting and barring checks.

All information you provide will be treated as confidential and managed in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and guidance. You have a legal right to access any information held about you.

Personal details	
Name:	
Previous name(s):	
Address with postcode:	
Telephone/mobile number:	
Date of birth:	

Criminal record declaration

The role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in England, Scotland and Wales or the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. You are therefore required to declare all unspent convictions and conditional cautions and all spent convictions and adult cautions that are not protected (i.e. eligible to be filtered).

If this role has been defined as regulated activity or work it will also be subject to an enhanced with barred list check in England, Northern Ireland and Wales or checks under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme in Scotland.

It is a criminal offence to apply for or accept a position working with children if you have been barred from/listed as unsuitable to engage in regulated activity/work with children.

Are you included on the list of people barred from/listed as unsuitable to engage in regulated activity/work with children?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
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If yes, please provide further information:

If you are not currently barred from working with children, have you been referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Disclosure Scotland for consideration to be added to one of the lists?	
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If yes, please provide further information:

Conduct declaration

Have you ever been known to any children's services department or police as being a risk or potential risk to children?

YES

NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Have you ever been dismissed for misconduct from any paid or voluntary position previously held by you?

YES

NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Have you ever been under investigation for or subject to any disciplinary sanctions in relation to your conduct at the time of your employment?

YES

NO

If yes, please provide further information:

Have you ever been subject to any sanctions being placed on your professional registration, by a regulatory or licencing body in any country? (as applicable)

YES

NO

N/A

Sanctions may include: Warnings, conditions, limitations, suspensions removal or any other restrictions that may have applied to your professional registration.

If yes, please provide further information:

Confirmation of declaration (tick box below)

I agree that the information provided here may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and I understand that an offer of employment may be withdrawn or disciplinary action may be taken if information is not disclosed by me and subsequently come to the organisation's attention.

In accordance with the organisation's procedures if required I agree to provide a valid criminal record certificate and consent to the organisation clarifying any information provided on the disclosure with the agencies providing it.

<input type="checkbox"/>	I agree to inform the organisation within 24 hours if I am subsequently investigated by any agency or organisation in relation to concerns about my behaviour towards children or young people.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that the information contained on this form, the results of the criminal record check and information supplied by third parties may be supplied by the organisation to other persons or organisations in circumstances where this is considered necessary to safeguard children.

Please complete the declaration below:

I declare that all the information I have provided in this disclosure is full and correct at the time of application and that I have not omitted anything that could be relevant to the appointment of someone who will work with children. I understand that an offer of employment may be withdrawn, or dismissal may result, if information is found to be inaccurate or not disclosed by me and subsequently brought to Footsteps attention.

I understand that the declaration of a criminal record will not necessarily prevent me from being offered this role. If my application is successful, a risk assessment of the disclosed information will be completed.

I agree that the information I have provided may be processed in connection with recruitment purposes and that the recruitment panel may be made aware of any relevant information that I have disclosed in order to discuss the matter(s) with me.

I understand that the information contained on this form and/or the results of a DBS check may be supplied by the Footsteps to other organisations in circumstances where this is considered necessary to safeguard children.

I have read the Standard/Enhanced Check Privacy Policy for applicants <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-privacy-policies> and I understand how DBS will process my personal data.

Please note that, if you are appointed, this form will remain on your personnel file. If you are unsuccessful, this disclosure form will be securely destroyed within 6 months of your application.

Signature of Applicant:	
Print name:	
Date:	

16 Appendix 3 – Disclosure and Barring Service Disclosure Assessment Form

(To be used in circumstances where information has been disclosed by the Disclosure and Barring Service

Date of Issue: September 2024

Date of Review: September 2025

and considered with reference
 to the Recruitment, Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and Disclosure & Barring Policies)

NAME OF APPLICANT:	POSITION APPLIED FOR:
LINE MANAGER:	PROPOSED START DATE:

CONSIDERATION	ASSESSMENT
Is Applicant barred or disqualified from working with children?	<i>Note it is an offence for an applicant to apply for working with children if they are barred from working with children.</i>
Type of offence/sentence given:	<i>Nature of the offence</i>
Date of offence:	<i>Was the Applicant a juvenile or adult at the time of the caution/conviction? How long ago was the caution/conviction awarded?</i>
Relevance to position applied for:	<i>Is the caution/conviction relevant to the role which will be undertaken? Does the position involve face to face contact or contact via ICT that may occur on more than one occasion?</i>
Level of accountability/responsibility:	<i>What level of supervision will the Applicant receive? Is the Applicant likely to be placed in circumstances similar to those in which he previously offended?</i>

Applicant's attitude to the offence:	<p><i>Does the Applicant show remorse?</i></p> <p><i>Was the situation disclosed on the Self-Disclosure Form and/or discussed at interview?</i></p> <p><i>Does the Applicant take responsibility for the offence and recognise the harm that he/she caused?</i></p>	
Mitigating circumstances:	<p><i>Were there particular personal circumstances at that time which led to the offence (eg. financial hardship, dysfunctional family) which have now changed?</i></p>	
Risk before precautions/ controls High / medium / low <i>(Please explain the reasons for your decision)</i>	Minimise risk by <i>(Describe precautions/controls):</i>	Residual risk after controls are in place High / medium / low <i>(Please explain the reasons for your decision)</i>
Decision: <p>The Applicant will not be appointed / The Applicant will be appointed subject to the following conditions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The Applicant will be appointed</p>		
Conditions of appointment:		
Assessed by:		
Print Name.....		Signature.....
Job Title		Date Assessed.....
A DECISION TO APPOINT MUST BE AUTHORISED BY THE PRINCIPAL		

Authorised by:

Print Name..... Signature.....

Job Title Date Authorised.....

Print Name..... Signature.....

Job Title Date Authorised.....