

FOOTSTEPS TRUST SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Footsteps Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, trustees, agency workers, contractors and visitors to share this commitment.

The Academy recognises that safer recruitment is a critical component of safeguarding and child protection. Robust recruitment and selection processes help to deter, identify and reject individuals who may pose a risk to children and vulnerable young people.

As an Alternative Provision, Footsteps works with students who may have:

- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.
- SEND.
- Child Protection Plans.
- Social care involvement.
- Experiences of trauma and adversity.
- Increased vulnerability to exploitation.

The Academy therefore applies the highest standards of recruitment, vetting and ongoing safeguarding practice.

2. Legislative Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026.
- Children Act 1989.
- Children Act 2004.
- Education Act 2002.
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Childcare Disqualification Regulations.
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Independent School Standards.
- Alternative Provision statutory guidance.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

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- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Online Safety Policy.
- Allegations Against Staff Procedures.

3. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Protect children and young people.
- Promote safer recruitment practices.
- Deter unsuitable applicants.
- Identify safeguarding concerns during recruitment.
- Ensure compliance with statutory guidance.
- Promote equality and fairness.
- Ensure all staff understand safeguarding responsibilities.
- Support a culture of vigilance and professional curiosity.

4. Recruitment Principles

Footsteps will ensure that:

- Recruitment is fair, transparent and consistent.
- Safeguarding is embedded throughout recruitment.
- All applicants are treated equitably.
- Decisions are based upon suitability, qualifications, experience and safeguarding considerations.
- Appropriate pre-employment checks are completed.
- Recruitment records are maintained securely.

The Academy will not appoint any individual who may pose a risk to children.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Trustees

The Board will:

- Ensure effective safer recruitment procedures are in place.
- Monitor compliance with this policy.
- Ensure safeguarding remains central to recruitment decisions.
- Receive assurance regarding recruitment compliance.

Principal

The Principal will:

- Ensure implementation of this policy.
- Oversee recruitment processes.
- Authorise recruitment decisions.
- Ensure safeguarding considerations are properly assessed.

Recruitment Panels

All recruitment panels will:

- Apply this policy consistently.
- Assess safeguarding suitability.
- Record decisions appropriately.
- Challenge gaps and inconsistencies.

At least one member of every recruitment panel will have completed recognised Safer Recruitment Training.

6. Equal Opportunities

Footsteps is committed to promoting equality and diversity.

The Academy will not discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage or civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

Reasonable adjustments will be made during recruitment where required.

7. Advertising Vacancies

All advertisements will:

- Promote safeguarding responsibilities.
- Include safeguarding statements.
- Specify DBS requirements.
- Highlight the Academy's commitment to child protection.
- Outline key responsibilities.

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8. Applications

All applicants must complete the Academy's application form.

CVs alone will not be accepted.

Applications must include:

- Full employment history.
- Qualifications.
- Professional experience.
- Referee details.
- Explanations for employment gaps.

Applications will be scrutinised for:

- Missing information.
- Inconsistencies.
- Unexplained gaps.
- Frequent employment changes.

Any concerns will be explored further.

9. Shortlisting

Shortlisting panels will assess applicants against:

- Person specification.
- Job description.
- Safeguarding suitability.
- Values and behaviours.

Any anomalies, inconsistencies or concerns identified during shortlisting will be explored during interview.

10. Online Searches

In accordance with KCSIE expectations, online searches will be conducted on all shortlisted candidates.

Searches will:

- Use publicly available information only.
- Be proportionate.
- Focus on safeguarding and suitability.
- Identify potential reputational concerns.
- Support recruitment decisions.

Searches may identify issues relating to:

- Safeguarding concerns.
- Extremism.
- Discriminatory behaviour.
- Professional conduct.
- Criminal activity.

Where concerns arise, candidates will be given the opportunity to discuss findings.

11. Interviews

Interviews are an essential safeguarding measure.

All interviews will:

- Explore suitability to work with children.
- Assess professional values.
- Test safeguarding understanding.
- Explore previous employment history.

Candidates will be asked questions relating to:

- Child protection.
- Professional boundaries.
- Safeguarding scenarios.
- Behaviour management.
- Equality and inclusion.

Special attention will be given to candidates working directly with vulnerable students in Alternative Provision settings.

12. Safeguarding Suitability Assessment

Throughout recruitment, the Academy will assess whether candidates:

- Demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding.
- Understand professional boundaries.
- Promote student welfare.
- Demonstrate appropriate values and attitudes.
- Can work safely with vulnerable students.

Safeguarding suitability is given equal importance to qualifications and experience.

13. Criminal Record Self-Declaration

Shortlisted candidates will complete a criminal record self-declaration form.

Applicants must disclose:

- Unspent convictions.
- Relevant cautions.
- Information that may appear on DBS disclosures.
- Relevant investigations where applicable.

Failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of an offer.

14. Pre-Employment Checks

No appointment will be confirmed until required checks have been completed satisfactorily.

Checks will include:

Identity Verification

Verification of identity using original documentation.

Right to Work

Legal entitlement to work in the UK.

Enhanced DBS Check

Appropriate DBS clearance for the role.

Barred List Check

Where regulated activity applies.

Qualifications Check

Verification of professional qualifications.

Employment History Review

Review of gaps and inconsistencies.

References

Receipt of satisfactory references.

Prohibition Check

Teaching prohibition checks where required.

Section 128 Check

For management positions.

Childcare Disqualification Check

Where applicable.

Health and Fitness Check

Confirmation of fitness to undertake the role.

15. Overseas Checks

Candidates who have lived or worked overseas may be required to provide:

- Overseas criminal record checks.
- Certificates of good conduct.
- Professional regulatory information.
- Additional safeguarding evidence.

Risk assessments will be undertaken where records are unavailable.

16. References

A minimum of two references will be obtained.

References must:

- Be from professional sources.
- Include the most recent employer.
- Be obtained directly.
- Be verified where necessary.

Referees will be asked:

- Whether they have concerns regarding suitability to work with children.
- Whether any safeguarding concerns exist.
- Whether disciplinary action has occurred.
- Whether allegations have been made.

References will be reviewed before appointment wherever possible.

17. Alternative Provision Recruitment Considerations

Given the nature of Alternative Provision, Footsteps seeks staff who demonstrate:

- Trauma-informed practice.
- Emotional resilience.
- Strong safeguarding awareness.
- Effective behaviour support skills.

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- Commitment to inclusion.
- Ability to build positive relationships.

Recruitment processes will assess candidates' ability to work effectively with vulnerable learners.

18. Single Central Record (SCR)

The Academy will maintain a Single Central Record in accordance with KCSIE.

The SCR will record relevant checks for:

- Employees.
- Trustees.
- Agency workers.
- Supply staff.
- Contractors.
- Volunteers where applicable.

The SCR will be reviewed regularly.

19. Induction

All new staff will receive safeguarding induction before or immediately upon commencing employment.

Induction will include:

- Safeguarding Policy.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Staff Code of Conduct.
- Whistleblowing Policy.
- Online Safety Policy.
- KCSIE Part One.
- Behaviour Policy.
- DSL contact details.
- Filtering and monitoring arrangements.

Induction records will be maintained.

20. Contractors and Agency Staff

The Academy will obtain written confirmation that relevant safeguarding checks have been completed on:

- Agency workers.
- Supply staff.
- Contractors.

Visitors must:

- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Sign in.
- Wear identification.
- Be supervised where appropriate.

The Academy retains ultimate responsibility for safeguarding on site.

21. Volunteers

Volunteers will:

- Be risk assessed.
- Receive safeguarding information.
- Be appropriately supervised.

Volunteers will not engage in regulated activity without appropriate safeguarding checks.

22. Low-Level Concerns

The Academy recognises the importance of identifying low-level concerns about adults working with children.

A low-level concern is behaviour which:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct.
- Falls short of the allegations threshold.
- May indicate unsafe practice.

All low-level concerns will be:

- Recorded.
- Assessed.
- Addressed appropriately.

Patterns of behaviour will be monitored.

23. Probation and Ongoing Monitoring

Safer recruitment continues after appointment.

New staff will:

- Complete induction.
- Attend safeguarding training.
- Participate in supervision and probation arrangements.

Concerns arising during employment will be managed through safeguarding and disciplinary procedures where necessary.

24. Record Keeping and Data Protection

Recruitment records will be:

- Securely stored.
- Maintained in accordance with UK GDPR.
- Retained only as long as necessary.

Confidential information will be handled appropriately.

25. Monitoring and Review

The Principal and Trustees will monitor:

- Recruitment compliance.
- SCR compliance.
- Safeguarding training.
- Recruitment audits.
- Policy implementation.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes.
- KCSIE is updated.
- Significant safeguarding developments occur.