Willow School Policy



Schools Recruitment Policy

Date: December 2025

Review Date: December 2026

Purpose

Willow School recognises school employees as being fundamental to the success of the school and to the effective safeguarding of children. Willow School aims to recruit a diverse and consistently high performing workforce with the necessary knowledge and skills to help the school achieve its goals. This will be achieved by ensuring that recruitment processes are fair, consistent, transparent, cost-effective and in line with equality and diversity practices. In addition, the appointment of all school employees will be in accordance with the current statutory DfE (Department for Education) guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).

Principles

- Recruitment is an activity where those involved in the recruitment process will see confidential information of a personal nature. Due care and consideration will be given for this information during and after the process, in line with relevant Data Protection policies.
- An Appointing Officer will manage a recruitment process. They will be trained accordingly and have the authority to recommend to the Proprietors the decision to appoint.
- As a minimum the Appointing Officer will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.
- The Appointing Officer will establish a selection panel consisting of 2 or more people.
- Successful candidates cannot commence employment until all the relevant pre-employment checks have been carried out and the candidate has been cleared to start employment.

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Ensuring a Fair Recruitment Procedure

In accordance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, Willow School is committed to ensuring that equal opportunities are advanced, and discrimination is prohibited, throughout all stages of recruitment. Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will always be carried out without regard to gender, trans status, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, age, pregnancy or maternity leave or trade union membership. This policy should be read in line with the Equality and Diversity Policy.

Willow School recognises and values the diversity of their workforce and communities and seek to ensure that all the attributes, talents and skills available throughout the community are recognised when employment opportunities arise. This commitment extends to the development of current employees, and internal applications are encouraged for opportunities available.

All vacant posts should 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. Any internal recruitment process will follow the procedures set out in this policy.

In order to ensure a healthy and safe working environment which supports all staff, personal health and wellbeing at work is embedded and considered within recruitment processes. Including mental health as well as physical health, this approach is embedded at all stages; from job design, selection, recruitment, training, development and appraisal.

Selection Criteria

Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, experience and skills will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job. All employment decisions including those on recruitment, selection, promotion, training and career development, are based solely on job related objective criteria.

An up-to-date job description and person specification will be produced for all posts. Job descriptions ensure potential applicants understand the requirements of the post. This will provide the base for recruitment, selection and induction, training, appraisal and other employment activities.

Job descriptions and person specifications should be developed for all roles in the school, including teaching staff and the leadership team.

Safeguarding Requirement: In order for the school to fulfil its obligations to safeguard children and to meet the standards set by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board, all school based job descriptions must include reference to the post holder's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Job Evaluation: The school's Human Resources company provides an evaluation service and grades to ensure equal pay requirements are met.

Person Specifications: Should include qualifications, professional registrations (if required), skills, competencies and previous experience required for the post. The person specification should also include the requirement to be cleared by the DBS for work with children and the Fluency Duty wording.

Link to selection: Each requirement on the person specification will be graded as either 'Essential' or 'Desirable'. These grades will be used for short listing purposes after the closing date. The person specification can also detail how these issues will be tested – e.g. application form, interview, or assessment day.

As a general rule it is unlawful for an employer to specify that they require a person with particular characteristics e.g. a particular race or gender, unless there is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for the position, and this can be objectively justified as a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. Any school wishing to apply this exemption must first seek HR advice.

Fluency Duty

Part 7 of The Immigration Act 2016 contains a duty on public authorities, including schools, to ensure that each person who works for them in a public-facing role speaks a level of English which is sufficient to enable them to effectively carry out their role. This is known as the Fluency Duty.

Disclosure of personal relationships or conflicts of interest during the recruitment process. All applicants are required to disclose if they are related or have any personal relationships with any employee of the school. Applicants are asked to state the name of the person and the relationship.

An employee shall not be involved in any appointment process where they are related, or have a close personal relationship outside of work with the individual considered for appointment. All candidates will be asked by the Appointing Officer if they have any other outside business interests that may conflict with those of the school. Where these are declared, the Appointing Officer will discuss the significance of this with the candidate to determine whether or not their application can proceed.

Interviews

Those conducting recruitment interviews will ensure that the questions that they ask job applicants are not in any way discriminatory or unnecessarily intrusive. The interview will focus on the needs of the job and skills needed to perform it effectively.

The Appointing Officer will ensure that any reasonable adjustments for the purpose of interviewing candidates are put in place. There is an opportunity for these to be shared prior to the interview. Arrangements may include, but are not limited to:

- Allowing deaf or speech impaired people to bring an interpreter with them.
- Alerting employees to be prepared to show blind people to the place of interview.
- Ensuring that the place of interview is accessible to any candidate with a mobility disability or that assistance is available to them when they arrive.
- Allocating extra time for interviews or assessments.
- Contacting occupational health for advice on additional adjustments.

In accordance with Safer Recruitment requirements, the Appointing Officer may wish to complete the Candidate Interview Assessment Form, ensuring that any gaps in employment and training history are full explored with the candidate to obtain and record an explanation.

Outcomes After Interview

Rejection

The candidate is not suitable for the position. Candidates who are unsuccessful after interview will be informed of the outcome of their interview, as soon as reasonably practicable. The Appointing Officer will be sensitive to the need to provide feedback to candidates, if requested to do so and will provide information about where the candidate did not meet the required criteria.

Provisional Offer

Where a candidate is successful, a provisional offer of employment is made. This enables the school to undertake all necessary pre-employment recruitment and vetting checks before a final offer is made. Pre-employment checks include, but are not limited to:

- Identity checks
- Qualifications and certificates
- Asylum and immigration (right to work) checks
- Enhanced DBS / criminal records checks
- Pre-employment medical / health screening

- Employment and character references
- Professional registration checks

A provisional offer of employment may be withdrawn where any of the above checks are not satisfactory, as deemed by the Proprietors, or if candidates fail to complete their pre-employment check tasks within 15 days of the process commencing.

Recruitment documentation, for successful and unsuccessful candidates, will be retained securely for 6 months in line with GDPR requirements, after which it will be securely destroyed, unless it forms part of a safeguarding concern or ongoing employment record.

References

KCSIE recommends that references are requested prior to a candidate attending interview, as this will allow any concerns they raise to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview. This should be made clear to candidates in the advertisement and candidate information pack.

All external appointments are subject to the receipt of two satisfactory work references, one of which must be the applicant's present or most recent employer. In exceptional cases the panel may agree that either one or both references need not be work references (e.g. for school leavers or returners to work after a long career break). Where this is the case, character references will be sought instead. References from a partner or relative will not be accepted.

One reference is required for internal candidates, which will be requested from their current Manager / Head Teacher. For teachers, there is a statutory duty for current employers to provide details of any capability procedures involving the individual in the previous 2 years, and the reasons for this.

Overseas Checks Statement of Good Conduct

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, where an applicant has lived or worked overseas, the school will make any further checks it considers appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered.

These checks may include obtaining overseas criminal record checks or certificates of good conduct (sometimes referred to as certificates of good repute) where available and appropriate. The availability, process and reliability of such checks vary between countries.

Between January 2016 and 31 December 2020, schools were required to check whether a newly appointed teacher was included on a list of individuals prohibited from teaching in an EEA country. This check was accessed via the Teacher Services system.

Following the UK's exit from the European Union, this EEA sanctions list is no longer in operation and there is no longer a statutory requirement to carry out this check.

Where overseas checks cannot be obtained, or where further assurance is required, the school will undertake a risk-based assessment and consider additional safeguarding measures, in line with government guidance on criminal records checks for overseas applicants.

Right to Work in the UK

In all cases, a right to work in the UK check must be carried out prior to any applicant being permitted to start work, and is carried out as part of the interview process. The Recruiting Manager/Appointing Officer is required to see the applicant's original documents, with the applicant present, and check that:

- The documents are genuine, original and unchanged and belong to the person who has provided them.
- The dates for the applicant's right to work in the UK have not expired.
- Photos are the same across all documents and look like the applicant.
- Dates of birth are the same across all documents.
- The applicant has permission to do the type of work being offered (including any limit on the number of hours they can work).
- For students, they must provide evidence of their study and vacation times.
- If 2 documents give different names, the applicant has supporting documents showing why they're different, e.g., a marriage certificate or divorce decree.

The guidance for these requirements is regularly updated and therefore Head Teachers/Appointing Officers should refer to the most up to date (national) guidance as to how to carry out right to work checks and what documents can be accepted.

DBS and Barred List Check

For appointments where the employee will be undertaking regulated activity an enhanced DBS certificate, which includes barred list information, will be required prior to starting work. The barred list check is a check to establish that the person is not barred from regulated activity - legally this can only be done if the person is in regulated activity.

The full legal definition of regulated activity is set out in Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. 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. Regularly means on more than three days in any period of 30 days, and other than driving, if any of the work takes place between 2am and 6am and it gives the person the opportunity to have face to face contact with the children. 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.

Personal care does not include such activities as, for example, parent volunteers helping with costumes for school plays or helping a child lace up football boots

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If a school knows or has reason to believe that an individual is barred, it commits an offence if it allows the individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.

For any other staff and proprietors who have an opportunity for regular contact with children who are not engaging in regulated activity, an enhanced DBS certificate, which does not include a barred list check, will be appropriate.

The Appointing Officer must see the actual DBS certificate from the employee and will record the disclosure certificate number and the date of the check on the schools Single Central Record. The certificate will be returned to the candidate and not retained on file.

Individuals can join the DBS Update Service at the point an application for a new DBS check is made, enabling future status checks to be carried out to confirm that no new information has been added to the certificate since its issue. This allows for portability of a certificate across employers. There is an annual fee for using the update service, which will be funded by the school.

Before using the update service, the school must:

- Obtain consent from the applicant to do so.
- Confirm the certificate matches the individual's identity and
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, e.g. enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.

The school can then subsequently carry out a free online check. This would identify whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial certificate was issued and advise whether the individual should apply for a new certificate.

In exceptional circumstances, where a school allows an individual to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, they should ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that all other checks, including a separate barred list check, have been completed. The school must also complete a DBS Risk Assessment. If a DBS check reveals details of convictions which may render the applicant unsuitable for the applied for post, the appointing Proprietor/Head Teacher will discuss the situation with the applicant in line with the DBS Code of Practice. A Cause for Concern Risk Assessment Proforma will also be completed.

Health Clearance of Successful Candidate

All new employees will be required to go through a health clearance before appointment. This is carried out via the occupational health provider.

The Appointing Officer will arrange for a fitness for work questionnaire to be provided to the candidate, which will be completed and returned to the provider. Occupational health will notify the Appointing Officer of any reasonable adjustments required, or any other health concern that they need to be aware of, in agreement with the employee.

Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006 and the 2018 Regulations

The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge)(Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 replaced the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006.

The regulations place additional requirements on schools employing staff working in early years provision with children from birth up to and including the first of September following their 5th birthday, and in later years provision (before and after school childcare) with children who have not attained the age of 8, as shown in the table below:

	During school Hours	Outside School hours
Reception age or younger	Covered	Covered
Older than reception age until age 8	Not covered	Covered
8 years or older	Not covered	Not covered

*Outside school hours does not include school clubs, e.g. choir or sports' teams, but does include breakfast clubs or after-school provision. All schools providing such child care, regardless of the setting, must take appropriate steps to ensure that they are not employing a person disqualified to work with these age groups in a childcare setting.

For new employees an up-to-date enhanced DBS certificate will help schools establish whether the offences committed by that individual are relevant offences. For existing employees school should use the DBS update service. The criteria for disqualification under the 2006 Act and the 2018 Regulations include those set out in the list below:

a) Inclusion on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Children's Barred List.
b) Being found to have committed certain violent and sexual criminal offences against children and adults which are referred to in regulation 4 and Schedules 2 and 3 of the 2018 Regulations.
c) Certain orders made in relation to the care of children which are referred to in regulation 4 and listed at Schedule 1 of the 2018 Regulations.
d) Refusal or cancellation of registration relating to childcare, or children's homes, or being prohibited from private fostering, as specified in Schedule 1 of the 2018 Regulations.
e) Being found to have committed an offence overseas, which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2018 Regulations if it had been done in any part of the United Kingdom.

The above list is only a summary of the criteria that lead to disqualification. Further details about the specific orders and offences, which will lead to disqualification, are set out in the 2018 Regulations.

N.B. Following the introduction of the 2018 regulations there is no longer a disqualification by association requirement for individuals working in childcare in non-domestic settings (e.g. schools and nurseries).

All schools providing such child care, regardless of the setting, must take appropriate steps to ensure that they are not employing a person disqualified to work with these age groups in a childcare setting. Applicants must complete the Childcare Disqualification Self Declaration prior to their appointment.

Individuals who are disqualified are not permitted to continue to work in early or later years' provision or be directly concerned in the management of that provision. An application can be made to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification and further details about how to make an application for a waiver can be found in the fact sheet "Applying to waive disqualification: early years and childcare providers".

Online Searches in Recruitment

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education Schools and Colleges are permitted to undertake online searches for candidates who have applied for a vacancy within your establishment. This is not a statutory requirement and therefore each school may determine whether they wish to undertake online searches as part of pre-employment checks.

Should you opt to carry out online searches you must treat all candidates equally and therefore you should:

- Ensure these checks are included for all candidates to ensure a consistent approach in your Recruitment practices.
- Determine who within your establishment will be responsible to carry out these checks.
- Not befriend others or request to join groups on social media in an attempt to find information on an individual.
- If you find information that is of concern you should:
    - Ensure you screenshot this evidence and record the date and time it was found prior to discussing with the individual.
    - Allow the individual a full opportunity to provide any explanation.
    - Contact your HR provider for further guidance.

If you do not already, it is advised that the following wording is included in any job adverts you post so that all candidates are clear of the pre-employment checks undertaken by the school "All pre-employment checks carried out are in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education". Online searches, if undertaken, will normally be carried out on shortlisted candidates only and prior to interview.

Qualifications and Professional Accreditations

The school must ensure that any person employed to teach has the required teaching qualification. The DfE Teacher Services System should be used before appointing a teacher to check for:

- The award of QTS
- Completion of teacher induction

Further advice on undertaking these checks is available on the government website Teacher Status Checks: Information for Employees. Applicants should also provide evidence of qualifications essential for the post, irrespective of the post they are applying for.

Prohibition Order Check

Anyone appointed to carry out teaching work will be subject to a prohibition order check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching. This check will be completed using the Teacher Services System prior to appointment.

Teaching work includes planning and preparing lessons, delivering lessons to pupils, assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils, and reporting on pupils' progress and attainment.

Prohibition order checks are not normally required for teaching assistants or support staff unless they are carrying out teaching work.

Compliance with Data Protection

Schools will process personal data collected during the recruitment process in accordance with their Data Protection Policy on processing special categories of personal data and criminal records data, as detailed in their Recruitment Privacy Notice.

Data collected as part of the recruitment process is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing the recruitment exercise effectively to decide to whom to offer the job.

Data Monitoring

Application forms include a Recruitment Monitoring Form to monitor equality and diversity. The form will be removed from all applications received, prior to short listing and will not form part of the shortlisting process.

The Recruitment Monitoring Forms of successful candidates can be stored, collated and reviewed to support the school with equality and diversity monitoring.

Staff Probation Period

New employees are subject to a six-month probation period before their appointment is confirmed, unless otherwise stated. Probation periods give the school the opportunity to assess a new employee's suitability in the role they have been appointed to and for the employee to demonstrate their ability to effectively perform their duties, have the opportunity to become familiar with the main duties and tasks of their post and demonstrate the standard of performance, attendance and conduct expected of them. Safeguarding expectations, the staff code of conduct and whistleblowing procedures are reinforced throughout the probation period. The probationary period is also an opportunity for the new employee to determine if the position and the school are suitable for them.

Agency Workers

Where the school engages an agency worker the school must obtain written confirmation from the agency that the same checks have been carried out for supply staff as the school would have carried out on its own staff. The school will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made. This will be recorded on the School's Single Central Record.

Schools should be aware of the rights of agency workers, as per the Agency Workers Regulations 2010. These regulations give agency workers the entitlement to the same (or no less favourable) treatment as comparable employees with respect to basic employment and working conditions, if they complete a qualifying period of 12 weeks in a particular job. Guidance on the recruitment and the treatment of agency workers is provided on GOV.UK. and in the Department for Education Agency Workers Regulations; Supply Teachers guidance; and in the Agency and other off -payroll working guidance.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Willow School is committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all its recruitment and business relationships, and to ensuring that modern slavery and human trafficking have no place within the school or its supply chain.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires organisations with an annual turnover above £36 million to publish a slavery and human trafficking statement each financial year. Willow School's turnover is below this threshold, and this statement is published voluntarily, reflecting the seriousness with which the school treats this issue and its wider safeguarding responsibilities.

Our Commitment

Modern slavery encompasses slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, and human trafficking. Willow School has, and will continue to have, in place systems and controls intended to ensure that modern slavery is not taking place within its own workforce or within its supply chains. This statement should be read alongside the school's Recruitment Policy, Whistle-Blowing Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Our Workforce

- All staff appointments follow the school's Safer Recruitment procedures, including identity checks, right to work checks, references and, where required, enhanced DBS checks, as set out in the Recruitment Policy.
- Where staff are engaged through an employment agency, the school obtains written confirmation that the agency has carried out the same pre-employment checks as the school would carry out on its own staff, and verifies the identity of the individual presenting for work.
- Right to work checks are carried out on every individual prior to them starting work, in line with current Home Office guidance, to guard against illegal working and associated exploitation.

Our Supply Chain

- The school works with a limited number of regular suppliers and contractors (for example, catering, cleaning, transport and site maintenance) and will, where proportionate, seek written assurance that these organisations comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- Where concerns arise about a supplier's practices, the school will review the relationship and may seek alternative provision.

Raising a Concern

Any member of staff, volunteer, contractor or visitor who has concerns that a colleague, agency worker, contractor or member of a supplier's workforce may be a victim of modern slavery, forced labour or trafficking should report this immediately in line with the school's Whistle-Blowing Policy, or to the Designated Safeguarding Lead where the concern relates to or may affect a child. Concerns will be treated confidentially and taken seriously, and no one raising a genuine concern in good faith will be penalised for doing so.

Training

Safeguarding training for all staff includes awareness of exploitation and trafficking indicators, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, and covers the National Referral Mechanism as the route for referring both child and adult potential victims of modern slavery.

Responsibilities

Area	Responsibility	Named Lead
Agency and supply staff checks	Obtain and retain written confirmation from agencies that the same pre-employment checks have been carried out as for directly employed staff, before the individual starts work.	Recruiting Manager / Appointing Officer
Contractor and supplier due diligence	Seek written assurance from regular contractors and suppliers (catering, cleaning, transport, facilities) that they comply with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and do not use forced, bonded or child labour.	Head Teacher / Proprietors
Staff training and awareness	Ensure safeguarding training covers indicators of exploitation, trafficking and modern slavery affecting adults as well as children, including referral routes such as the National Referral Mechanism.	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Reporting a concern	Provide a clear, confidential route for staff to raise concerns about exploitation of colleagues, agency workers, contractors or supply chain workers, without fear of reprisal.	DSL / Head Teacher, via Whistle-Blowing Policy
Annual review	Review this statement annually, or sooner if legislation, guidance or the school's risk profile changes.	Head Teacher / Proprietors

Apprentices

Where a school recruits and appoints apprentices themselves the recruitment checks detailed in this policy will be followed. Where the school recruits an apprentice through an apprenticeship provider the school will obtain written confirmation from the provider that the same checks have been carried out for the apprentice as the school would have carried out on its own staff. The school will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made. This will be recorded on the School's Single Central Record.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an essential part of the school workforce. A volunteer is someone who gives their time with unpaid activity to help an organisation or an individual. Under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers, who on an unsupervised basis teach or look after children regularly or provide personal care on a one-off basis in schools and colleges, will be in regulated activity. The school or college will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (which will include barred list information) for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity. Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be rechecked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information). However, schools may decide to conduct a repeat DBS check (which should include barred list information) on any such volunteer.

Schools may obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (not including barred list information), for volunteers who are not engaging in regulated activity but have the opportunity to come into contact with children on a regular basis, e.g. supervised volunteers.

Single Central Record Schools are required to keep a single central record. This document must cover all staff, including supply staff and teacher trainees on salaried routes, who work at the school. The information that must be recorded is:

- Have the appropriate checks been carried out
- Have certificates been obtained
- The date on which each check was completed / certificates obtained

For supply staff and apprentices, schools should also include whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff / apprentice has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, and the date that confirmation was received and whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of staff.

Where checks are carried out on volunteers, schools should record this on the single central record.