



# Safer Recruitment Policy

Reviewed	Date of Next Review	Responsibility
December 2024	December 2025	Head of HR

## Our Mission:

**'To enable young people to live and work without barriers'**

## Our Values:

- **Teamwork** – we hold ourselves and each other to account and are better when we work together
- **Compassion** – we act with trust, honesty, and kindness in everything we do
- **Inclusion** – we treat each other fairly and with respect
- **Innovation** – we encourage thoughtful, creative, and aspirational ideas
- **Pride** – we encourage each other to be proud of who we are and what we do

## **Safer Staff Recruitment Procedures**

1. The Fairfield Trust (FT) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All members of staff, and volunteers, regardless of their post, share in the responsibility for protecting students, keeping them safe from harm whilst they are attending any area of the Trust and for reporting any concerns about a young person's welfare. At any time that a formal interview takes place, two managers will be in attendance and questions on safeguarding will be asked during the interview. During interviews for senior posts, representative(s) from the Trust board or Senior Leaders will be in attendance.
2. These recruitment procedures are intended to formalise the system and highlight safeguarding procedures already established by the Trust.
3. It draws upon the advice given in the documents 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education,' and recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry (2004) as well as guidance set out in the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education.

## **Safer Staff Recruitment Procedures**

4. It is the intention of the Trust to undertake strict procedures in the recruitment of new staff to any post.
5. All posts will be advertised, internally, externally, or both, according to the requirements of equal opportunities legislation.
6. Application forms will contain a statement confirming that the Trust reserves the right to carry out online searches which includes social media.

## **Shortlisting**

7. Applicants will be shortlisted according to criteria relating to the person specification for the post. Shortlisted candidates will be sent the Trust's Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding & Child Protection policies when invited to attend interview/workshop. Online checks will be carried out on shortlisted candidates using specific and consistent search terms. Details of online searches will be retained, and any identified concerns will be reported to the DSL prior to any interview/workshop.
8. All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a Criminal Records Self Declaration Form ahead of interview. The Trust reserves the right to withdraw offers of interview if this information is not received prior to interview.

## **Interviews**

- HR will carry out an identity check of all candidates on interview/workshop day. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to supply three forms of suitable ID for a DBS check. Candidates will be asked to provide a Birth Certificate for an identity check where possible.
- Right to work checks will be carried out in line with current Government guidance.
- Qualification checks will be carried out by HR on interview/workshop day.

9. The interview process will vary depending on department and role. All interviews will meet the requirements set out in the Safer Recruitment Policy. Recruitment workshops are held when recruiting for roles in Young People's Services only.

### **Education Interviews**

Candidates will be given a tour of the college site and will participate in an observed session, working directly with young people. A written element may also be required. The observer will provide a written record. A formal interview will follow with two managers; one interviewing manager must be safer recruitment trained. Specific safeguarding questions will be asked, and the interviewing panel will explore candidate's motivation for working with young people. Any discrepancies arising from references will be explored during interview. Interviewing managers will provide a written record and grade for the formal interview.

### **Commercial Interviews**

Candidates will attend a tour of the site, and a formal interview will be held with two managers, one interviewing manager must be safer recruitment trained. Specific safeguarding questions will be asked, and the interviewing panel will explore the candidate's motivation for working with young people. Any discrepancies arising from references will be explored during interview. Interviewing managers will provide a written record of the formal interview.

### **Young People's Services Workshops**

Workshops are advertised externally and interested candidates complete an online Enquiry Form. Each candidate is offered an initial phone call with a Team Member or Manager.

During the phone call, individuals are asked questions which are designed to elicit the level of interest and enthusiasm for living the Trust values and to initially explore the candidate's motivation for working with young people. If there is a potential fit for the Trust, the candidate will be asked to complete an online application form, and once the application is received and checked, the individual will be invited to attend a workshop. At this stage, HR will request references and explore any previous employment within the Care sector via phone calls to previous employers to confirm that there are no safeguarding concerns. Records of such conversations for the successful candidate will be retained in the employee's personnel file. All applications will be scrutinised by the Registered Manager (or interviewing manager) prior to the workshop.

Those applicants who do not demonstrate the required motivations for working with our young people or those who fail to meet the expected standards of response during the telephone discussion, are advised that their application will not be progressed. Records of telephone discussions are retained where appropriate and can be used to support decision making following workshops.

Workshops consist of a series of tasks, which demonstrate how people work as part of a team, how they interact with the young people that we support, and their compassion towards others. HR will explore any discrepancies with references or employment history directly with the candidate at the start of the workshop.

Group and individual discussions take place during the workshop so that managers can gauge suitability for the role. Records are retained for successful candidates and stored in the personnel file.

10. A summary of the terms and conditions of employment, including the Safer Recruitment process, are explained to all candidates at the formal interview or workshop.

It will be explained to all candidates that employment is dependent upon:

- Two satisfactory references, one of which will be verified. Both references will be verified for residential and Living Well Service posts.
  - A clear, Enhanced DBS Check.
  - Sight of original identification and qualification certificates relevant for the post (if appropriate). Qualifications will be recorded on PeopleHR, and scanned copies of relevant qualifications will be retained on file.
  - A written explanation of any gaps in the applicant's work history will be recorded at the interview and placed on the personnel file.
  - Written records of the interview process will be retained in personnel files of successful applicants.
11. The decision making will involve all staff who were part of the interview process and the decision to appoint will be based on the grades achieved by candidates.
  12. The successful candidate will be asked to attend an induction with HR to complete the following elements which make up the routine recruitment procedure for all staff:
    - Completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check at the appropriate level applicable to the role. The form may be completed remotely, and necessary proof of identification seen and retained in the employee's file.
    - Documentary evidence of identity such as birth certificate so that the applicants' identity can be confirmed. This identification is scanned to the employee's file and must be the original document (photocopies will not be accepted).
    - The Staff Code of Practice will be issued and signed for.
    - The Trust's Safeguarding process will be explained to all new employees, including the process for reporting concerns (including low level concerns). The Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will be identified, and their roles explained.
    - All new employees will complete compulsory training prior to their start date. (Level 1 Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Training).
    - The staff Acceptable Use of College IT Equipment and the Staff Code of Conduct will be issued and signed for.
    - Any further information required e.g. any time spent living or working outside of the UK and proof of eligibility to work in the UK.
    - A photograph of the new member of staff will be taken to retain on file.
  13. A tracking system will be used to ensure that all the above steps are completed in the recruitment of all staff regardless of role. Further policies and procedures specific to the individual role, will be issued and signed for.

14. New staff are permitted to begin induction training before DBS clearance has been received but must be supervised by staff at all times and will not have unrestricted access to young people or MIS systems. Where this applies, a risk assessment will be carried out and placed on file.
15. If a DBS result contains information or if applicants disclose a conviction, applicants will be treated fairly and equally based on their skills and ability to fulfil the duties required. An appointment decision will be made based on all relevant information and where deemed necessary, a risk assessment will be carried out by at least two members of SLT to assess the potential risk to students.

The outcome of the risk assessment may result in the termination of employment due to failure to comply with employment requirements, this will depend on the nature of the offence. If this is not the case, any risk assessment will be kept securely in the employee's file and indicated on the Single Central Record.

16. Should it come to light that an applicant has made a false statement in attempting to gain employment, this will be reported to the appropriate government agencies and the employee may be suspended from duty, until such time as the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of SLT who will seek advice from all relevant bodies.

### **Safer Recruitment Training**

17. The Head of HR, senior managers and a Trustee will attend accredited Safer Recruitment Training to ensure the recruitment, selection procedures and processes help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse young people or who are unsuited to work with them as an essential part of creating a safe environment.

The training will:

- give participants an awareness and understanding of offender behaviour.
- identify the key features of staff recruitment that help deter or prevent the appointment of unsuitable people.
- consider policies and practices that minimise opportunities for abuse or ensure its prompt reporting.
- help participants begin to review their own processes and the Trust policies with a view to making them safer.

### **Advertising posts**

18. All advertisements for vacancies will carry the safeguarding statement:

*Fairfield Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and all staff are expected to share this commitment. You will be expected to report any concerns relating to the safeguarding of young people in accordance with agreed procedures. If your own conduct in relation to the safeguarding of young people gives cause for concern, Fairfield Trust agreed child and adult protection procedures will be followed.*

All posts involving direct contact with young people, children and vulnerable groups are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. However, amendments to the Exception Order 1975 (2013 & 2020) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected'. These are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account.

Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found on the [Ministry of Justice website](#):

For all roles that involve regulated activity, a DBS check will be required before appointment is confirmed.

19. Advertisements will notify potential applicants of the need to undertake pre-employment checks including DBS Check at the appropriate level for roles which involve regulated activity.

## **Applications**

20. Job Descriptions will be placed on the Trust website for the duration of the advertisement and applicants will be directed to read the Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment policies and this will be explored further at interview.
21. Applications are accepted strictly by application form only. Under no circumstances are CVs accepted.
22. Application forms are scrutinised for both paid and voluntary posts and any gaps in employment, study or training must be accounted for. Application forms must include a full and thorough personal & employment history, personal and qualification information. Application forms must be signed by the applicant. Where an electronic signature is obtained against the applicant safeguarding declaration, shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide an in-person signature on the day of interview/workshop.
23. Application forms with incomplete or missing information may not be accepted.

## **References**

24. Two references will be requested for each candidate using the Trust's Safer Recruitment Reference Request Form. A covering letter will be included with each request. Requests will include a request for information regarding the suitability of the candidate to work with vulnerable young people. Specific questions will be asked about the candidates conduct whilst in post and the reason for leaving will be sought and verified.
25. References are requested prior to interview, (one of which must be from the most recent employer). Where a candidate has not worked with children or young people for a period of time, a reference will be sought from the employer where the candidate most recently worked with young people. These will be scrutinised and cross referenced against information contained in the application form and will be considered as part of the interview process.

Where a candidate has been self-employed and/or if it is not possible to obtain references, enquiries may be made with the relevant bodies to verify information ie Companies House and HMRC. A comprehensive pre-employment risk assessment will be undertaken in order to determine whether it is safe to offer employment.

Following receipt of the references, HR will telephone one of the referees to check the validity of the reference, (both references in the event of appointment to a residential post).

When verifying references, HR will ask if there are any issues with the applicant working with vulnerable young people and whether there are any safeguarding concerns. A record of the conversation will be retained in the employee's file and the date of the conversation will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

### **Residential/Living Well Service Posts**

- Two references will be requested prior to interview/workshop (current and previous employers), and both will be verified with a telephone call.
- The Registered Manager will check all references for staff who are successfully appointed to Living Well and Residential roles.

### **Volunteers**

- All volunteers will be subject to the full safer recruitment process (as set out within this policy).
- Any individual who wishes to work on a voluntary basis, within any area of the Trust, will complete an application form in the first instance.
- A tracking system will be retained for each volunteer and under no circumstance will a volunteer, for whom no checks have been carried out, have unsupervised access to young people.
- The candidate will be invited to meet an appropriate manager to discuss their application in more detail and to explore the person's motivation for applying, their background and any relevant skills and experience.
- If the application is successful, the candidate will be asked to complete Level 1 Safeguarding and Prevent Duty Training prior to their start date.
- Two satisfactory references will be required, one of which will be verified with a telephone call to the referee to ask specific questions relating to any safeguarding concerns.
- For roles that constitute regulated activity, a DBS application will be submitted at the appropriate level with barring list checks where required. Details of DBS results will be retained on the Single Central Register.
- HR will carry out an identity check and volunteers will attend a HR induction where further details will be obtained on the individual's background and motivation for working with young people. The Trust's safeguarding process will be explained in full, and volunteers will be aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding young people.
- Safeguarding policies and relevant internal safeguarding processes will be shared with the volunteer and a signature required.
- Prior to confirming any volunteer placement, HR will carry out a safeguarding risk assessment which will explore the candidate's background and what is known about the individual both informally and formally. A copy will be retained in the volunteer electronic file.
- All volunteers (and staff) must read and sign the most up to date version of Keeping Children Safe in Education Part One along with the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Once all the above has been completed, the individual will be issued with a lanyard and photo ID card.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Tamasin Jones**

**Head of HR**

December 2024