



SAFER RECRUITMENT IN EDUCATION POLICY

Many people applying for paid and unpaid roles within an educational setting are safe and trustworthy around children or young people. However, perpetrators of abuse may deliberately target settings that give them easy access to children or young people. They may seek to gain a position of trust and authority that will put them above suspicion (II CSA, 2018).

The Den's commitment to safeguarding and child protection is presented clearly and explicitly at every stage of our recruitment process.

Our policy and process for Safer Recruitment in Education follows the guidance laid out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2023\)](#).

This policy and process for Safer Recruitment in Education applies to all workers who represent The Den.

We ensure that:

- Every person involved in recruitment of workers in our organisation knows that they have a responsibility to keep safe the children and young people we work with. This includes the Directors and any employees involved in any part of the recruitment process.
- All roles advertised always include details of our beliefs, values and culture of keeping children and young people safe.
- As per our Safeguarding Policies, any candidate who - once a Status Check has been applied against their Enhanced DBS certification, and only with their

expressed permission for us to apply the Status Check - is found to be barred or disqualified from working with children, is committing a criminal offence. This candidate will be reported to the police.

- All staff are trained in safer recruitment and follow national and locally specific safeguarding guidelines laid out by each local authority or school when recruiting educators within the same region.
- We ensure that any specific training requested by local authorities, for example specific Safeguarding Training provided by the local Children's Safeguarding Partnership, is undertaken by each member of staff involved in any part of the recruitment process or, downstream from recruitment, and any individual working with children and young people.

Selecting the right people for our roles

1. Selection of suitable candidates

- a. All full-time and part-time employees involved in recruitment must go through Safer Recruitment Training provided by the NSPCC or an approved organisation which is CPD certified. **No recruitment of any worker can happen without this training certification.**
- b. All candidates must possess an in-date Enhanced DBS and Barred List Check. We expressly ask for permission from all successful candidates that we are allowed to carry out a Status Check to establish whether the applicant's Enhanced DBS is up to date.
- c. If the candidate's Enhanced DBS certificate was not issued within the last 36 months, we consider it to be out of date, and the applicant must apply for a new Enhanced DBS check from the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- d. We ensure that we verify a candidate's work history before any interview.
- e. We always apply equal opportunities and consider the relevant legislation (Equality Act 2010). In interviews, we apply the following rules:
 - i. Gut feeling is never enough – we apply a rigorous interview technique that allows us to explore key comments or reactions fairly.

- ii. Where candidates do not show up for an interview, without the candidate providing a legitimate reason, we will not continue to review their application.
 - iii. Where candidates do not show up for an interview, but a legitimate reason is provided by the candidate, we will endeavour to rearrange their interview for another time.
 - iv. We use marking criteria consistently to make decisions about each candidate.
 - v. Questions must always be relevant to the job and selection criteria must be justified including scrutiny of the applicant's motivation to work with children.
 - vi. Cover the same key issues and topics with all candidates.
 - vii. Probing is fine as long as it is relevant to the criteria and carried out in a non-discriminatory way.
 - viii. Avoid prejudices and don't ever assume.
- f. We ensure fair treatment of all candidates by ensuring:
- i. All interviewers are well trained and briefed.
 - ii. We utilise a standardised application form to receive all applications.
 - iii. Detailed notes are taken on each interview for future reference. These notes include a scoring record from 1 poor to 5 excellent, and figures are driven by the positive and negative indicators we attach to each of our interview questions.

Positive indicators include:

- deals with challenges
- prioritises the wellbeing of the student
- handles pressure
- is keen to learn
- willing to compromise

Negative indicators include:

- sees challenges as problems
- does not see safeguarding as everyone's responsibility
- negative attitude towards solutions suggested by others

- g. We make an accurate record of the interview and the candidate's responses, using the candidate's own words. This enables us to make

an informed assessment after the interview.

- h. We have a process for when and how long we will store this information. The Information Commissioner's guidance states that interview information can be retained if it is relevant to and necessary for the recruitment process itself, or for defending the process against challenge. How long it is stored is based on our individual business needs and follows the latest guidance under the Data Protection Act 2018 and Guide to the General Data Protection Regulation (Information Commissioner's Office, 2019).
- i. For recruitment purposes and to ensure evidence in the event of a recruitment tribunal, we keep assessment notes for a minimum of six months before securely destroying them.
- j. When assessing criminal conviction disclosures, we ensure the following procedures are strictly adhered to:
 - i. The panel first considers whether the offence(s) disclosed is relevant to the post. If not, the disclosure can be ignored.
 - ii. If the offence(s) is clearly relevant or, as is often the case, the disclosure doesn't give enough information to reach a decision, then the panel will need to decide what further information it needs to obtain from the applicant and whether it needs to approach anyone else to obtain further information, such as the police force that dealt with the case or the previous employer.
 - iii. When assessing any disclosure information on a DBS certificate, we will take into consideration the explanation from the applicant, including:
 - the seriousness of any offence and relevance to the post applied for;
 - how long ago the offence occurred ;
 - whether it was a one-off incident or a history of incidents;
 - the circumstances around the incident; and
 - whether the individual accepted responsibility for their actions
 - iv. Due to the vulnerable nature of the young people we work with, our Safer Recruitment requirements require us to be particularly risk sensitive with regards to DBS disclosures. Where there is the potential of risk involved in a candidate working with us, we will investigate this following the process described in the point above. Should we not be able to satisfy ourselves that there is negligible risk in relation to the candidate working with the vulnerable young people we support, we will not make an offer of employment to that candidate. A candidate

that would need a risk assessment in order to work with our young people would be considered above the threshold of risk we can accept when supporting a vulnerable learner.

v. If an applicant discloses a recent or serious offence against, or involving, children and this is not recorded on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate which we Status Check, we will consult the relevant agency to find out whether they wish to consider barring the person from working with children.

vi. Any information regarding convictions which has been voluntarily disclosed to us is checked as to whether it could be 'protected', and therefore could be filtered from the Enhanced DBS check. If the information disclosed is protected, then we will not withdraw an offer based solely on this voluntary disclosure.

j. Prior to notifying any candidate of their success we conduct a range of final checks including:

- The identity of candidates based on a likeness of themselves to their passport photo
- Proof of their address
- The right for candidates to work in the UK
- That we have candidates' Enhanced DBS and Barred List Check
- For candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK for a period of 6 months or more, in the past 5 years, we require them to provide a certificate of good conduct or criminal record clearance certificate from the government of the country they were resident
- We verify qualifications, including safeguarding training certification and prevent training certification aligned with latest updates from the Home Office.
- We check QTS where applicable using the teacher services system.
- The authenticity of the candidate's identification, right to work in the UK, Enhanced DBS and Barred List Check, certificate of good conduct or criminal record clearance certificate (if applicable), qualifications, and QTS are all verified through reference to the original documents.
- We collect referee details before interview, discuss their suitability at interview, and check the receipt of at least two written references and their authenticity via telephone.
- We check the individual is not prohibited from teaching through references to the Teaching Regulation Agency's Prohibition from Teaching List where applicable.
- We check the candidate's medical fitness is sufficient to complete the duties of their role.
- Whether the candidates' work with us will involve relevant activity.
- All checks are confirmed in writing and retained on the individuals file in line with the relevant data protection regulations.

k. Initial candidate selection

- a. Two people scrutinise each of the applications which are sent to us via our standardised application form, where a CV is also required as an attachment.
- b. We identify work history gaps of greater than 3 months, discrepancies in work history, incomplete work history, and a history of career changes.
- c. We also conduct an online search of candidates to see if anything online might affect the safeguarding of children or young people. Candidates are informed of this online search being conducted at the shortlisting stage.
- d. We act consistently - each applicant is assessed using the same criteria

l. Candidate interviews

- a. Each interview is reviewed by two members of our team.
- b. Identified work history gaps of greater than 3 months, discrepancies in work history, incomplete work history, and a history of career changes are questioned and candidates are only passed if these are adequately explained.
- c. Candidates are questioned on their knowledge of safeguarding and only those candidates who evidence a thorough understanding of safeguarding, and demonstrate their understanding of its importance, are passed.
- d. Interviewers follow up on any statements that could indicate a safeguarding concern within a candidate's attitude toward, or previous actions around, young people.

m. Verifying candidate's identity

- a. We collect and check at least two forms of ID from the candidate, ensuring at least one document is an in-date Photo ID source.

n. Right to work in the UK

- a. We require all successful candidates to present us with evidence of their right to work in the UK.

o. Criminal convictions check

- a. We require all candidates to present us with an Enhanced DBS and Barred List Check.
- b. We require the candidate's Enhanced DBS and Barred List Check to have been issued within the last 36 months.
- c. Where the candidate wishes to use an Enhanced DBS on the update service we ensure we:
 - Obtain consent from the applicant to do so
 - Confirm the certificate matches the individual's identity
 - 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.
- d. We ensure an Enhanced DBS and Barred List Check is obtained from the candidate before, or as soon as practicable after, the person's appointment.
- e. Where the candidate has lived abroad for more than 6 months in the past 5 years we require them to provide us with a certificate of good conduct from the government of the country in which they were resident.

p. Qualifications and training

- a. We require certificate evidence of all qualifications and training relevant to the role that a candidate is being recruited for.

q. Reference requests

- a. All candidates must provide the details of two referees, one of which is from their most recent employer, prior to interview (where possible). Where references cannot be obtained prior to interview, if any concerns are raised, these will be explored further with the referee and the candidate will be asked for a second interview.
- b. All referees are sent our Reference Request form which must be returned before the candidate in question can take on any work with The Den.
- c. References are only accepted if provided from a professional email address.

- d. References are asked to confirm whether the candidate has been the subject of any founded safeguarding concerns or disciplinary procedures.
- e. References must cover 2 years of employment with the referees and span a minimum of 5 years of the candidate's work history.
- f. References will be reviewed against information provided by the candidate to ensure there are no discrepancies. Where there are, these will be followed up on.
- g. References should detail the candidate's reason for leaving and these will be reviewed to ensure they do not indicate any potential concerns regarding the candidate's suitability for the role.
- h. References should be provided by a senior individual at the candidate's previous organisation.
- i. Where a referee does not respond / a reference is not provided, we will request a reference from the next most senior relevant individual. If a reference also cannot be obtained from this individual, a factual reference confirming dates of employment and records of founded disciplinary procedures and safeguarding concerns will be requested from the relevant HR or Admin team.
- j. When checking the legitimacy of references, we will also do the following:
 - obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed;
 - secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children), if the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference from their current employer;
 - always verify any information with the person who provided the reference;
 - ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source;
 - contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided;
 - compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate;
 - ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

r. Prohibition from Teaching check

- a. All candidates are checked against the Teaching Regulation Agency's Prohibition from Teaching List and must not appear on this list in order to pass our Safer Recruitment process.

s. Successful Candidates

Prior to the confirmation of an appointment, referees are telephoned to confirm their views on the candidate and to ensure information provided by the candidate is accurate.

- a. Every successful candidate is sent an induction email with:
 - Details of the Services
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Anti-bullying Policy
 - Complaints Procedure Policy
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - Details of our Designated Safeguard Leads (DSL) and Key Contacts
 - A self-disclosure form
 - A copy of *Keeping children safe in education: for school and college staff - part 1 (2023)* which they must then confirm that they have read and understood
 - A copy of *Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings*, published by Safer Recruitment Consortium
 - A copy of *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners*, published non-statutory advice from HM Government.
- b. All successful candidates will receive our safeguarding and induction training (which includes online teaching best practice) before they engage with any children or young people.

This Safer Recruitment in Education document is reviewed annually, and, where appropriate, is updated to reflect any statutory changes/improvements to the Safer Recruitment Policy.