

Safer Recruitment Policy

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Designated Safeguarding Officer and contact details:

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Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

The Graduate Network is committed to creating a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and adults at risk. In order to achieve this culture, we adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children applying for or securing employment.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to anyone engaged by The Graduate Network including our directors, staff, contractors, and any work placement/volunteers.

All prospective applicants will be supplied with copies of the Safeguarding Policy, Allegations Policy, Safeguarding Children Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, and Code of Conduct.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Graduate Network will –

- Prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children by having effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of staff and volunteers in accordance with the DfE guidelines, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Prevent people who are subject to a Section 128 direction (which prohibits or restricts a person who has previously been prohibited from teaching) from taking part in management of an independent school, including academies and free schools, in accordance with the DfE guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSIE) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- Ensure that it meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by conducting all necessary pre-employment checks.

Recruitment and Selection Process

All those involved with the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children will be trained to a recognised standard in safer recruitment. The Graduate Network ensures at least one person who conducts an interview has completed training in safer recruitment.

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Advertisements

When defining the role (whether through the job, role description and person specification) The Graduate Network will have regard to Section 215 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSIE) and include:

- The skills, abilities, experience, attitude, and behaviours required for the post; and
- The safeguarding requirements, i.e., to what extent will the role involve contact with children and will they be engaging in regulated activity to children.

All adverts will also include:

- The Graduate Network's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and make clear that safeguarding checks will be undertaken.
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification; and
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.

Application Forms

All roles advertised by The Graduate Network will include (in the application form or elsewhere) the following statement.

The Graduate Network is dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All appointments are subject to our comprehensive vetting procedures, including enhanced DBS checks and references. We adhere to Safer Recruitment practices and maintain the highest standards of compliance.

The Graduate Network also ensures that all prospective applicants provide the following:

- Personal details, current and former names, current address, and national insurance number.
- Details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving.
- Full employment history (since leaving school, including education, employment, and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment.
- Qualifications, the awarding body, and date of award.
- Details of referees/references; and
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believe are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

The Graduate Network does not accept curriculum vitae in place of application forms.

Shortlisting

In order to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow for this to be discussed at interview stage before the DBS certificate is received, all shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children.

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The Graduate Network will ensure the following:

- That at least two people conduct the shortlisting exercise.
- That reasons are given for any inconsistencies and for the gaps in employment and reasons for them; and
- All potential concerns are explored.

Employment History and References

All offers of employment made by The Graduate Network will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two written references from the last 24 months (to include any gaps in employment)

The Graduate Network follows strict standards and therefore will.

- Not accept open references e.g. to who it may concern.
- Not rely on applications to obtain their references.
- Ensure any references from the candidate's current employer have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the referee is school or college based, the reference should be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations).
- 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 secure a reference from their current employer.
- Always verify any information with the person who provided the reference.
- Ensure electronic reference originates from a legitimate source.
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided; and
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate.
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent position and,
- Ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.

Employment Selection

The Graduate Network uses a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for posts. All interview questions will include:

- Finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children.
- Exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role; and
- Probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking about the reasons for this.

All information considered in decision making will be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

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Pre-appointment Vetting Checks

The Graduate Network completes all the following legal pre-employment checks when appointing an individual to engage in regulated activity in relation to children:

- Identity check (including being aware of any name changes).
- An overseas police check (if relevant).
- Enhanced DBS check via the applicant (including children's barred list information).
- Verification of medical fitness.
- Verification of candidate's right to work in the UK; and
- verification of professional qualifications via the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) Employer Access Service.

Summary

The Graduate Network will make clients and candidates aware of the Safer Recruitment Policy through making it publicly available on our website and alerting candidates/clients to it all appropriate point of their journey.

All staff, temporary workers, candidates and contractors understand that the above checks must be conducted and must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other recruitment firms in order to safeguard children at risk. The public interest in safeguarding children at risk may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by The Graduate Network.