

Group Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Owner: Group Head of Operational Risk, Group Head of Safeguarding and Group Head of People Operations

Revised: March 2024

RATIONALE

This policy has been developed to embed safer recruitment practices and procedures throughout ISP, our regions, schools and offices and to support the creation of a safer culture by reinforcing our responsibility for the safeguarding and wellbeing of all children and young people in our care.

This policy has been endorsed by the ISP Executive Committee (ExCo) and Senior Management Team (SMT) and will be reviewed regularly and at least on an annual basis to ensure it continues to be in line with considered best practice.

This policy reinforces the expected conduct outlined in our Code of Conduct as well as our Whistleblowing Policy with which all employees are expected to be familiar with. All successful candidates for paid or volunteer employment will be made aware of these documents.

This policy is an essential element in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all students, employees and others within the ISP community and aims to ensure both safe and fair recruitment and selection of all employees and volunteers by:

1. attracting the best possible candidates/volunteers to vacancies
2. deterring prospective candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable from applying for vacancies
3. identifying and rejecting those candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable to work with children and young people

We are committed to using procedures that deal effectively with those adults who fail to comply with our safeguarding and child protection procedures and practices.

Any abuse against an employee will be dealt with in accordance with local guidance or law and will be reported to the relevant Regional Managing Director. ISP guidance will be followed if any ISP or school employee, volunteer or contractor has:

1. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
2. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
3. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

As an employer in a child centred business, we have a responsibility to safeguard all children that may come into contact with a previous employee, contractor or volunteer who has been dismissed or resigns because of misconduct towards a child. Therefore, in consultation with the Group Head

of Safeguarding schools must report to relevant authorities in their area any such behaviours and ensure such behaviours are reported in any reference applied for by future employers.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Group Heads of Talent and People Operations will:

- ensure the safe and fair recruitment and selection of employees at central and senior levels of ISP
- ensure that appropriate employees at all levels have completed safer recruitment training and repeat this annually.

The Regional Managing Director will:

- ensure the region and schools have effective procedures in place for the safe and fair recruitment and selection of employees, contractors and volunteers.
- monitor compliance and ensure these do not breach local laws.
- ensure that appropriate employees have completed safer recruitment training and repeat this annually.
- conduct SCR spotchecks to assess safer recruitment procedures when visiting schools and to require deeper checks / reviews of processes and procedures where necessary.

The Regional Head of HR will:

- be the regional expert in safer recruitment best practice and procedures.
- together with the RMD and Principals/ Heads of Schools and regional and school HR ensure the region and schools comply fully with ISP's procedures for the safe and fair recruitment and selection of employees, contractors and volunteers.
- ensure HR teams have the necessary training, support and guidance to carry out the safer recruitment processes and procedures effectively.
- lead on the onboarding of new schools and new Principals / Heads of Schools and other leaders from a safer recruitment perspective.
- monitor compliance and ensure these do not breach local laws.
- ensure that appropriate employees have completed safer recruitment training and repeat this annually.

The Principal / Head of School will:

- ensure the school has effective procedures in place for the safe and fair recruitment and selection of employees, contractors and volunteers and that these are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they meet local laws.
- ensure that all appropriate checks have been carried out on employees, contractors and volunteers in the school.
- together with school HR and the hiring/line manager, review all new starter documentation and sign off all new starters on the Single Central Register to confirm that all new appointments are safe to be in their school.
- together with HR and the hiring / line manager, check and assess any supporting documents such as risk assessments and exemption forms are completed as fully and accurately as possible.
- monitor third party and agency compliance safer recruitment practices.
- promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at every stage of the safer recruitment process.

The Hiring/Line Manager and School HR will:

- check the CV/Application form for any gaps or inconsistencies, raise these during interview and will ensure references or other evidence is in place to cover any gaps prior to appointment.
- conduct an online, due-diligence search in line with ISP safer recruitment guidance on any short-listed candidates and raise any questions that arise during interview.
- scrutinise references to ensure that they are relevant, meaningful, contain no adverse comments or inconsistencies and raise these with the applicant prior to a start date being confirmed.
- review candidates' CVs and ensure that all relevant criminal background/police checks checks are provided
- complete any necessary supporting documents such as risk assessments and exemption forms fully and accurately to follow the safer recruitment policy
- ensure all successful candidates are added to the SCR once offer is accepted and that all check outcomes are recorded in an accurate and timely way on the SCR.
- promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people at every stage of this process

SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

INVITING CANDIDATES

All advertisements, paid or unpaid, will include the following statement:

“This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All post holders are subject to appropriate vetting procedures, including an online due diligence search, references and satisfactory Criminal Background Checks or equivalent covering the previous 10 years employment history.”

All vacancies in ISP and our schools are managed through our recruitment system, Jobvite. Every time a new vacancy arises a requisition must be created in Jobvite, and the required details below must be completed. Internal and external candidates will use Jobvite to search for vacancies and access relevant information on roles available.

The ISP Application form and supporting information will be accessible within Jobvite and consists of three main sections:

Section 1

The role profile / job description and person specification will be shown on the requisition details

Section 2

Explanatory notes on how the requirements of each role will be tested and assessed during the selection process. Details of this will also be included on any invites to interview attendees. For example:

‘in addition to candidates’ ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including their:

- motivation to work with children and young people;
- ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people;
- emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviour;
- attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline;
- any relevant information about the organisation and the recruitment process, and other relevant policies such as the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- any specific terms and conditions relating to the post;
- general policy and practice in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare'

Section 3

The application process also makes it clear to potential candidates that:

- 10-year background checks will be required for all posts (this is included on all applications as standard).
- If the applicant is short listed any relevant issues arising from his or her references will be taken up at interview.
- We will seek references on short-listed candidates and may approach previous employers for information to verify experience or qualifications before interview.
- If the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, his or her current employer will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children, including any in which the penalty is “time expired”, (e.g. where a warning could no longer be considered in any new disciplinary hearing) and whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns, and if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. If the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, then contact will be made with that employer who will be asked about these issues;
- Providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected and referral to the police.

A curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of a completed application form.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE RECRUITMENT PANEL

At least one member of the Selection and Recruitment Panel will have successfully completed training in safer recruitment within the last year.

SHORTLISTING AND REFERENCES

Candidates will be shortlisted against the person specification for the post. Shortlisting should be carried out by a two-person panel, at least one of whom will have undergone safer recruitment training.

At least two references, covering a minimum of three years, one of which must be from the applicant's current/most recent employer where possible, will be taken up before the selection stage so that any discrepancies may be probed during this stage of the procedure (note references should come from the line manager of the previous organisation, not a colleague, and should be sent from a professional email address).

References will be sought directly from the referee, and where necessary, will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges. Where possible references will be requested in advance of interview.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted in order to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges.

Referees will be asked specific questions about the following:

- The candidate's suitability to work with children and young people, if applicable
- Any substantiated allegations
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, relating to the Safeguarding of children and young people
- The candidate's suitability for the post.

Reference requests will include the following:

- Applicants current post and salary
- Attendance record
- Disciplinary record

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures and criminal background checks.

INVITATION TO INTERVIEW

Candidates called to interview will receive:

- A letter confirming the interview and any other selection techniques
- Details of the interview day including details of the panel members
- Further copy of the person specification
- Details of any tasks to be undertaken as part of the interview process
- The opportunity to discuss the process prior to the interview
- Be asked to provide proof of identity

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates.

Interviews will, where possible, always be face-to-face and may include additional interview techniques such as observation or exercises. Where this is not possible, an initial online interview will be conducted, followed by a face-to-face meeting with shortlisted candidates.

Candidates will be required to:

- Explain any gaps in employment
- Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on the Criminal Background check or equivalent.
- Demonstrate their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people and their ability and willingness to promote the ISP/School core values.

EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

An offer of appointment will be conditional, and all successful candidates will be required to:

- Provide proof of identity
- Provide Criminal Background Checks or equivalent covering any country they have lived and worked in during the last 10 years.
- Provide proof of professional status
- Provide actual certificates of qualifications
- Complete a confidential health questionnaire [in countries where this is permitted]
- Provide proof of eligibility to live and work in the country of employment

The above must be included in the conditional offer letter clearly stating that failure to comply will result in the offer being withdrawn.

All checks will be:

- Confirmed in writing
- Documented and retained on the personnel file
- Recorded on the school's Single Central Register
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.

Employment will commence subject to all checks and procedures being satisfactorily completed.

In exceptional circumstances an action plan/risk assessment can be put in place to ensure the employee is supervised until all checks are in place, this **must** be authorised by either the Group Health and Safety Director, the Group Head of Safeguarding or the Group Head of People Operations before employment begins.

Any failure to follow this process will be handled via the appropriate local disciplinary procedure.

ONBOARDING

All employees and volunteers who are new to the school will receive information on the school's safeguarding policy and procedures and guidance on safe working practices which would include guidance on acceptable conduct/behaviour. These expectations will form part of new employees' onboarding training.

All successful candidates will undergo a period of onboarding and will:

- Meet regularly with their onboarding tutor; or
- meet regularly with their line manager; and
- attend appropriate training including generalist child protection training.

SUPPLY STAFF

All supply staff will be subject to the 10 year background checking policy and referencing process and will be required to complete the generalist child protection training.

CONTRACTORS/VOLUNTEERS

All contractors/volunteers engaged directly by ISP / the school will be subject to the 10 year background checking policy and referencing process and will be required to complete the generalist child protection training.

THIRD PARTY/OUTSOURCED STAFF

The third party company will be required to provide a current criminal background check or equivalent for the country they are working in for every member of their staff working in the school or a letter confirming that they have these on file and will be kept up dated every three years and the staff working in the school will complete the generalist child protection training.

APPENDIX

EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKING GUIDANCE

ALL SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES ARE REQUIRED TO consent to and undertake a criminal background check covering the ten years prior to their start date with the Company and will cover all countries of residence during that period (i.e. all countries they have lived, worked or studied in). Candidates are expected to facilitate this process and assist ISP or the school in obtaining what is necessary.

This process will be repeated every three years during an employee's employment with ISP or the school, to cover the previous three years of employment e.g. a teacher is employed in Abu Dhabi, during the recruitment process the 10-year checks will be provided, after three years of employment only a UAE check will be required, the full 10 years does not need to be repeated.

If an employee transfers to another ISP school, then the leaving school needs to provide certificate numbers and dates of certificates on record to the new school so that the 10-year process does not have to be repeated. Thereafter, they will need to repeat the process every three years. School HR will support the employee with this process and keep all results, records and documents secure and confidential and comply with local data protection laws.

Useful advice on criminal background checks by country can be found on the following UK / Canadian websites:

- UK Guidance (countries A-F)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/countries-a-to-f-applying-for-a-criminal-records-check-for-someone-from-overseas>
- UK Guidance (countries G-P)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/countries-g-to-p-applying-for-a-criminal-records-check-for-someone-from-overseas>
- UK Guidance (countries Q-Z)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/countries-q-z>
- Canada guidance - how to get a police certificate
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/medical-police/police-certificates/how.html>

NB International schools should be asking any potential employee who has lived or worked in the UK to obtain an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC). This can be obtained from this website <https://www.acro.police.uk/s/> but it's important that it is the International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) that is requested - *not the Police*

Reasonable costs associated with criminal background/police checks may be claimed back by the employee through the schools' expenses process.

In a minimal amount of cases certain country checks may be impossible to obtain once a candidate has left that country. The first point of action should be to ask the candidate if they have a previous background check dated within 6 months of them leaving. If they do, this can be accepted. If they don't, an exemption form should be completed and submitted for approval by the Principal/Head of School before being sent to the Regional Head of HR for review and final approval with the RMD. The exemption form should make clear the steps that have been taken in an attempt to obtain the check and why it is not possible to obtain it.

Contractors / Volunteers

Contractors/Volunteers engaged directly by ISP or the school are expected to comply fully with background checking and safer recruitment.

Third party/Outsourced staff

It is a requirement, and should be included in contracts, for all third party companies with employees that are regularly working in and around students that local criminal background checks are carried every three years. It is the school's responsibility to obtain certificate numbers and dates from the company and carry out ad-hoc audits to ensure compliance.