



Safer Recruitment Policy

2025-26

Review		
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Document Status	Date	Responsibility	Date of next review
Creation	09.25	Adele Lord-Laverick Georgina Gowthorpe	Sept 2026

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Version	2
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INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff at Lord Gowthorpe's is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Lord Gowthorpe's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the school's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
 - to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently in line with protected characteristics equality
 - to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
 - to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (**DfE**), Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (**KCSIE**), the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2015 (the **Prevent Duty Guidance**) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**); and
 - to ensure that the school meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.
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- At least 2 people are involved in the scrutiny and shortlisting of applicants for a role. Shortlisting must be completed against role specific criteria and person specification.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the school's policy.

The school has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and

relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2025 and Prevent Duty Guidance).

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

The school aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at Lord Gowthorpe's.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the governing body to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor the school's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the principals involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school.
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement. Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Application Forms

Lord Gowthorpe's uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Applicants submitting an incomplete application form will not be shortlisted. All applicants are expected to provide a full work history from the age of 16, including accounting for any breaks in employment.

The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the schools of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. CVs will not be accepted. The form is submitted privately to SLT. At least 2 people are involved in the scrutiny and shortlisting of applicants for a role. Shortlisting must be completed against role specific criteria and person specification.

It is unlawful for the school to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at the school. All applicants will be made aware that 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 and/or the DBS.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.

References

References for short-listed applicants will be sent for immediately after short-listing. Two references must be sought and verified. One reference must be from the most recent employer. A second reference can be a character reference, but they must have known the applicant in a personal capacity for at least 2 years.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the school. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised, so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

The school does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

Verification of references in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 3)

1. Purpose of references

Part 3 makes clear that references are not just a formality—they're a **safeguarding tool**. They help:

- Confirm employment history
- Identify any concerns about working with children
- Explore patterns (e.g. frequent job changes, gaps)

2. When to obtain references

- **Before interview where possible**, so any issues can be explored during it
- Always **before appointment is confirmed**

3. What a compliant reference should

- Be **from the most recent employer** (and previous relevant roles where appropriate)
- Be **direct from the referee** (not via the candidate)
- Include:
 - Dates of employment
 - Job role and responsibilities
 - Reason for leaving
 - Suitability to work with children
 - Any **disciplinary history** related to safeguarding (including allegations, whether substantiated or not, depending on policy and legality)

4. Verification steps

To “verify” references in line with Part 3:

- **Check authenticity**
 - Use official contact details (not just a generic email provided by the candidate)
 - Look for company domain emails rather than personal ones
- **Confirm the referee**
 - Ensure they are a **senior or appropriate person** (e.g. line manager, HR)
- **Scrutinise content**
 - Watch for vague or overly brief references
 - Note inconsistencies with the application or CV
- **Follow up concerns**
 - Contact the referee directly (phone is often best)
 - Clarify anything unclear or missing

- Document the conversation
- **Compare across checks**
 - Cross-check with:
 - Application form
 - Interview responses
 - Other pre-employment checks (e.g. DBS)

5. Red flags to act on

- Gaps in employment
- Discrepancies between reference and application
- Reluctance to provide safeguarding-related information
- Repeated short-term roles without clear reason

6. Record keeping

- Keep a **clear record** of:
 - References received
 - Verification steps taken
 - Any follow-up actions

7. Culture of professional curiosity

- If something feels incomplete or “off,” follow it up
- Don’t accept weak references at face value

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of **two interviewers** will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant’s ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed.

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE and the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 the school carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the **formal interview**, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the school's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- verification of the applicant's identity (if not previously been verified);
- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the School considers to be satisfactory;
- for positions which involve "teaching work":

i. the school being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency (formerly National College for Teaching and Leadership), or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working at the school or which, in the school's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the school; and

ii. the school being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at the school or which, in the school's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the school;

- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the school considers to be satisfactory;
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List¹;
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education at a school, taking part in the management of an independent school or working in a position which involves regular contact with children;
- confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent school;
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role;
- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
- any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
- verification of professional qualifications which the school deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where not previously verified).

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position at Lord Gowthorpe's.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check

The school applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the school which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is the school's policy that the DBS disclosure **must be** obtained before the commencement of employment of **any** new employee or volunteer.

It is the school's policy to re-check employees' DBS Certificates every three years and in addition any employee who takes leave for more than three months (ie maternity leave, career break etc) must be re-checked before they return back to work.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

Portability of DBS Certificates Checks

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £13 per annum, which is payable by the applicant.

This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers. The school will:

- Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search.
- 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, ie enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.

The Update check would identify and advise whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial Certificate was issued.

Applicants will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status.

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The school does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (eg marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Medical Fitness

The school is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the school, **after** an offer of employment has been made but **before** the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role.

The school is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

Overseas checks

The school, in accordance with the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will, if applicable, sponsor new foreign nationals (see Certificate of Sponsorship section).

In addition, applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal records check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by the school.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, and KCSIE, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by Lord Gowthorpe's The Single Centralised Register will contain details of the following:-

- All employees who are employed to work at the school;
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly or through an agency;
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, peripatetic staff and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, eg sports coaches etc.

Record Retention/Data Protection

The school is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the school will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the school to discharge its obligations as an employer, eg so that the school may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by the school for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the school. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Human Resources Office in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with school activities.

Lord Gowthorpe's will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Ongoing Employment

Lord Gowthorpe's recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

Leaving Employment at Lord Gowthorpe's

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely, there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks the school also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at the school despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed by the school from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the school may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Contractors and agency staff

Contractors engaged by the school must complete the same checks for their employees that the school is required to complete for its staff. The school requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the school.

Agencies who supply staff to the school must also complete the pre-employment checks which the school would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the school requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the school.

The school will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the school of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at the School.

Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires the school to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

The school is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children's Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity at the school or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of the school.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the school's usual visitors signing in protocol. This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitor's badge at all times and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments.

The school will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend the school. In doing so, the school will always have

regard to the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism" set out in KCSIE which states:

"Extremism' is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations."

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations the school does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

Volunteers

The school will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers. Under no circumstances will the school permit an unchecked volunteer into the premises.

It is the school's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who have not been involved in any activities with the school for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the school on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the school to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition the school will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The proprietors will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the school. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit.

SAFER RECRUITMENT EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Policy and Procedure

Safer Recruitment Policy updated and monitored on a regular basis
Consistency in recruitment procedures applied to all categories of employment
Use of application Form
Use of Job Description & Person Specification
Referees asked to specifically comment on suitability of applicant
Two written references taken up
One member of panel to examine references prior to interview
References followed up by a telephone reference
References to be obtained for volunteers/supply/agency staff
Questions asked on applicants child protection awareness
Explanation of gaps in employment
Proof of identity sought – originals not copies
Academic qualification checked – originals not copies
Medical clearance prior to employment
No employment until DBS Certificate has been completed and original disclosure received Above checks applied as appropriate to Overseas staff, supply/agency staff/gap/volunteers Panel interviews undertaken

Formal induction programme undertaken
Child Protection training / issue of Child Protection policy, Code of Conduct and Part One of KCSIE to new employee