Recruitment and Selection Policy

Valid From: September 2026

Next review due: September 2027

1. Introduction and Scope of the Policy

This policy is a formal statement of the principles that the governing body of The Wharf Nursery School has adopted in relation to the recruitment and selection of staff. We expect those involved in any stage of the recruitment and selection process to comply with the contents of the policy and familiarise themselves with any associated guidance and resources available to the school.

The policy addresses the relevance of safeguarding, equalities and relevant employment legislation to the process of appointing appropriately skilled staff of all categories, accords with the school's strategic objective to provide a safe and professional learning environment in which children can thrive and provides a framework for an efficient, effective and legally compliant recruitment process.

The governing body is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Accordingly, this policy complies with the current DfE guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. By ensuring that our recruitment and selection processes help to deter, identify and/or reject people who represent a risk of harm to children, or are otherwise unsuited to work with them, we can strengthen safeguards for children and young people.

2. Policy objectives

- To ensure a consistent and robust process for the appointment of all staff.
- To ensure that relevant equal opportunities legislation is adhered to and that applicants are engaged with in a non-discriminatory way without regard to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- To ensure that all recruitment practices are compliant with DfE safeguarding and staffing guidance, with clear links to child protection policies and procedures, ensuring as far as possible that all staff recruited to work in schools are suitable to work with children and young people.
- To ensure the most cost-effective use is made of resources in the recruitment and selection process.
- To ensure that newly recruited staff possess the most appropriate blend of qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the requirements of the role and school.

3. Responsibilities in relation to staffing the school

The governing body, with appropriate advice from the headteacher, is responsible for determining the staffing of the school and for all appointments to the school staff. Governors and school leaders will consider all new staff appointments in the context of curriculum-led financial planning over 3 to 5 years. This will include regular reviews of staff deployment.

The headteacher and Chair of Governors has delegated responsibility for the appointment of teachers and other staff outside of the leadership group. At least one person on any selection panel **must** have completed appropriate safer recruitment training. Selection panels will be as diverse as possible and reflective of the school community.

Once the selection panel has been agreed, the lead person or chair, in conjunction with the panel, will be responsible for drawing up the relevant documentation and planning the selection process.

The selection panel for any position will have responsibility for ensuring that a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory process is maintained throughout the recruitment and selection activities.

4. Safer Recruitment

The School's safer recruitment model focusses on four key themes.

- **Deterring unsuitable applicants** by stating our clear commitment to safeguarding, and applying a selection process that includes face to face interviews which include a range of questions by which to establish the candidate's motivations for working with children.
- **Rejecting unsuitable applicants** by scrutinising applications, exploring gaps in employment history, reviewing references and reasons for leaving previous employment, and assessing the competence and motivations of candidates at interview.
- **Preventing unsuitable appointments** by ensuring that those involved in selection processes are appropriately trained in safer recruitment techniques, that informed judgments are made and risk assessments carried out when a candidate discloses a conviction, and that pre-employment checks are carried out to a high standard.
- **Preventing and detecting safeguarding risks through appropriate risk assessment**, ensuring adequate supervision of non-regulated activities that include employee contact with children and vulnerable adults and reinforcing a safeguarding culture more widely within the school.

The arrangements in this policy aim to ensure fair selection and employment processes which ensure that the school can meet its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, as well as its legal and social obligations in relation to the rehabilitation of offenders.

Records of recruitment processes and decisions will be kept for six months after the date of appointment of the successful candidate, at which point records relating to unsuccessful candidates will be deleted from the school's systems and/or physically destroyed.

The specific measures to ensure safe recruitment practices, compliant with DfE advice, are highlighted at each stage of this policy, and the selection panel is responsible for ensuring the implementation of these measures. The safeguarding measures noted in this policy are not exhaustive or designed to remove the need to refer to the most recent DfE guidance.

5. Planning recruitment

Safeguarding Measures

- *The school will ensure that at least one member of any selection panel has completed up to date safer recruitment training.*
- *The school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children will be included in the job description and the person specification.*

- *All job descriptions will clearly set out the post holder's responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and describe the extent of relationships and contact with children and the degree of responsibility for children that the post holder will have.*
- *All person specifications will consider the need for the job holder to be suitable to work with children. Qualifications, experience, competencies and attributes needed for the role will be identified, along with an explanation of how they will be assessed during the selection process.*
- *All shortlisted applicants will be notified that any relevant issues arising from references will be taken up with the referee and at interview.*
- *All shortlisted applicants will be notified that the school will undertake appropriate online searches, as per KCSIE recommendations.*

The governing body, with the headteacher, will review the staffing requirements of the school annually and assess the short and long term recruitment needs so that, as far as possible, the school takes a planned approach to resourcing the school.

When a vacancy arises, the detailed requirements of the role will be reviewed before the start of the recruitment process so that they accurately reflect the school's needs.

The person specification will be assessed to ensure that job applicants receive no less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

A selection panel of at least two people will be agreed to manage the process, and will include the headteacher (and/or one or more governors) plus any of the following, as appropriate to the post: [note that maintained schools cannot delegate the power to appoint below the level of headteacher]

- Deputy and/or assistant headteacher
- Line manager for the post
- The local authority's [and diocesan authority's] representative (for headteacher and deputy headteacher appointments) [maintained schools only]
- A HR and/or local authority adviser where particular expertise or guidance is required.

Where possible, all panel members will have been trained in and/or have relevant experience of recruitment and selection and interviewing techniques, particularly in relation to safeguarding.

Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel this fact should be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to change the selection panel to ensure that there is no conflict of interest and that equal opportunities principles are adhered to.

6. Advertising

Safeguarding Measures

All adverts will include

- *a statement about the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.*
- *the requirement for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced DBS check and a check against the children's barred list.*

- *the safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children*

- *an explanation that the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. This means that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account*

6.1 All posts

The school will advertise all teaching and support staff posts internally and as widely as is possible externally. Where particular skills, experience or qualifications are required or recruitment difficulties are anticipated, posts will additionally be advertised on appropriate internet jobs sites and/or in the national/local press.

Adverts will state the school's commitment to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion, and will be worded in such a way that they do not needlessly limit the applicant pool, or associate a vacancy with one or other gender (unless a genuine occupational requirement exists).

Where circumstances dictate that the school should ringfence a post or promotion opportunity for existing staff in the first instance, this will be done in a consistent and transparent manner.

When a post has recently been advertised and a similar vacancy arises, or there is a need to recruit to a temporary appointment as soon as possible to ensure continuity within a post, it may be possible to make an appointment from the first pool of interviewees, rather than advertise the new vacancy.

6.2 Leadership posts

Headteacher and deputy headteacher posts will be advertised as the governing body considers most appropriate, but as a general rule the expectation is that such posts will, as a minimum, be advertised on relevant online job sites, and may additionally be advertised in appropriate nationally printed publications in order to attract the widest possible range of applications.

Where there is justifiable good reason not to advertise, and the governing body choose not to do so, the decision-making process will be robustly documented to ensure that it stands up to scrutiny. No final decision will be made until the local authority has been consulted.

7. The Application Process

Safeguarding Measures

- *All applications must be made using the school's application form for the position to ensure receipt of relevant personal data, (including DfE reference number and QTS/QTLS status) educational and employment history, declarations of relationships to existing employees, councillors and governors, details of referees and a supporting statement of personal qualities and experience.*

- *The application form will state that posts in schools are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and that offers of employment will be conditional upon a satisfactory enhanced DBS check with a check against the children's barred list. Candidates will need to declare at the application stage that they are not on the children's barred list, disqualified from teaching or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body.*

- *The application form will state the requirement for candidates who are shortlisted for interview to self-declare all unspent convictions and conditional cautions, spent convictions and cautions (subject to filtering), and current police investigations or pending criminal proceedings.*
- *The application form will include information about the school's requirement to take up references and undertake online searches for shortlisted candidates.*
- *For schools with children under the age of 8 : The school will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where a decision is taken that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and the checks are not carried out, a record of this assessment will be held on the individual's personnel file, including the school's evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.*

For all posts, the school will send out, or make available electronically, comprehensive information about the school and the vacancy to all interested parties. The information pack will consist of:

- a letter of introduction to the school, from the headteacher or selection panel lead/chair;
- a job description and person specification;
- an application form, including an equality monitoring form;
- a copy of the school's equal opportunities policy statement;
- a copy of the school's child protection policy statement;
- information about the terms and conditions relating to the post (hours, salary etc);
- information about the recruitment process (interview dates etc);
- any other relevant information regarding the post and the school (Ofsted report, etc.).

Applications received after the closing date will not normally be considered, unless the applicant has given prior notice of a late application and this has been agreed by the selection panel, or there has been a low response to the advertisement.

The school will ensure that its website is up to date and that candidates are signposted to it.

The school will not consider applications made through means other than school application forms, unless a reasonable adjustment has been made to accommodate the needs of an applicant with a disability.

8. The Selection Process

Safeguarding Measures

- *The school will reject incomplete applications or applications that are not submitted on school application forms. At the discretion of the selection panel, applications may be returned to the candidate for completion.*
- *The selection panel will explore any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment as part of the shortlisting process. Reasons for gaps in employment, repeated career changes, moves from permanent to temporary or supply teaching will be explored and verified.*
- *The selection panel will consider whether the referees provided by the candidate are suitable and challenge where they are not.*

- *References will be sought and obtained directly from the referee for all shortlisted candidates. References or testimonials provided by the applicant will not be accepted.*
- *References will seek the necessary relevant and objective information in line with current DfE guidance and a declaration from the referee that the applicant is suitable to work with children.*
- *All references will be vetted according to current DfE guidance.*
- *Issues of concern will be explored further with the referee (with any additional details recorded, dated and signed), and taken up with the candidate during (or before, if necessary) the interview.*
- *Where, in exceptional situations, references are not received prior to the interview, any concerns will be resolved satisfactorily prior to an unconditional offer of employment.*

8.1 Shortlisting

The school will ensure that equality monitoring forms are removed from applications prior to shortlisting, and are not shared with panel members.

The selection panel lead/chair will be informed where an applicant has requested reasonable adjustments to any part of the process to accommodate a disability.

The shortlisting process will select the applicants who best meet the criteria for the post as outlined in the person specification. Decision making will be based solely on the information available on the application forms and will be recorded by the panel in a consistent and transparent way.

If a disabled applicant meets the minimum person specification criteria they will be shortlisted.

8.2 References

The school will request references for all shortlisted candidates (including internal applicants) before interview. The school will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will not ask questions about a candidate's health or disability as part of these references prior to a job offer being made (this includes information relating to levels of sickness absence). The selection panel will carefully consider whether the referees provided by an applicant are suitable. Any applicants currently working in a school environment should give the headteacher/principal of that school/college as one referee. The school will not accept references from family members or friends.

Where a candidate is claiming specific qualifications or previous experience that is relevant to the job but is not verified by reference checks, these will be verified before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview.

All references subsequently received will be held by the chair of the selection panel who will explore any areas of concern directly with the referee, and also at interview. Once a preferred candidate has been chosen following the interview process, the rest of the interview panel will be given access to the references of that person only, in order to confirm their decision.

8.3 Other checks prior to interview

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to self-declare their criminal record in line with the relevant legislation and will be informed that the school will conduct online searches of publicly available content for all shortlisted applicants. Where criminal record information is disclosed, or where concerns arise out of an online search, it will usually be necessary to have a discussion with the applicant prior to or at the interview and the school would usually seek HR advice in these cases.

8.4 The interview and selection process

The school wants shortlisted candidates to be as prepared as they can be for interview, and will provide them with relevant information about the selection process, including details of any selection methods that will be used. Candidates who have declared a disability or other particular needs will be given the opportunity to highlight this prior to any selection activities in order that reasonable adjustments may be made to the recruitment process.

The selection panel will determine what additional selection methods will be used in addition to a face-to-face interview. These could include presentations, assembly, teaching observation, interaction with pupils, in-tray exercises, psychometric, verbal or numerical tests, according to the requirements of the role and what skills should be tested at the interview stage. Psychometric tests should only be administered and validated by a suitably trained person.

The panel will use the selection methods to objectively assess the merits of each candidate against the person specification and explore their suitability to work with children. The selection panel will ensure that all candidates are asked the same core questions at interview, based on the essential criteria for the post, although supplementary questions may differ according to the candidates' answers and backgrounds.

Particular care will be taken to ensure that no questions or selection methods could be viewed as discriminatory.

Safeguarding Measures

- *Invitations for interview will stress that the successful candidate will be subject to identity checks and an enhanced DBS check including a check against the children's barred list. Candidates will be asked to bring documentation to verify their ID, i.e. passport, driving licence, birth certificate, etc. to the interview.*
- *Candidates will be asked to bring their original documentation to confirm educational and professional qualifications to interview. Copies of all documents will be kept on file for successful candidates.*
- *In addition to assessing the candidate's suitability for the post, the panel will assess the candidate's attitude toward children and young people, their motivations for wanting to work in this sector, and their ability to support the school's safeguarding agenda and promote the welfare of children through targeted questioning. Gaps in employment history and concerns or discrepancies in the application form, references and online search content will also be explored.*

9. Job Offers to Successful Candidates

Safeguarding measures

- *The school will not make unconditional offers of employment until it has completed all pre-employment screening checks to the highest standard.*

Where:

- *candidates have declared at the application stage that they are not on the children's barred list, disqualified from teaching or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, but this is later found to be untrue for example via the DBS check*
- *an applicant has provided any other false information in, or in support of, his/her application or*
- *there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children*

the school will report this to the Disclosure & Barring Service and/or the police, as appropriate.

9.1 Job offers

Successful candidates will normally be offered the post verbally, followed by an offer letter as soon as possible afterwards. Written offers of appointment will include any terms that the offer is made conditional upon, e.g. satisfactory occupational health assessment, provision of appropriate documentation to verify entitlement to work in the UK and other relevant details.

9.2 Conditions of Appointment

Any offer of employment in the school will be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references, if not already received and vetted;
- Verification of the candidate's identity, if not verified on the day of interview;
- A satisfactory enhanced DBS check (including a check against the children's barred list);
- Verification of the candidate's fitness to undertake the role;
- Verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK (including a photocopy of the original evidence provided);
- Verification of the applicant's qualifications, if not verified on the day of interview;
- Verification of teacher professional status where required e.g. QTS/QTLS status;
- For those gaining QTS after 7 May 1999, verification of successful completion of statutory induction period;
- For support staff posts, satisfactory completion of any required probationary period.

9.3 Allowing someone to start work before the DBS certificate is available

The DBS will send a DBS certificate to the applicant, who must show the original paper DBS certificate to their potential employer before they take up post. Only in exceptional circumstances will the school allow an individual to start work in regulated activity before the enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information is available. Where this is essential, the school **must** ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that all other checks, including a separate children's barred list check, are conducted pending receipt of the DBS certificate. Schools should conduct a full risk assessment in such circumstances. Note that even when using the DBS update service, schools still need to obtain the original physical certificate.

10. Appointment and Promotion of Existing Staff

The school values the contribution of all staff within its community and, where possible, will seek to retain key skills. The school will support the continued professional development of all staff as they seek promotion to new opportunities both within the school and elsewhere, and as such encourages all members of staff to consider their suitability for any vacancy within the

school. Where a member of staff applies for a vacant post they will be given equal consideration to external candidates, based on the essential criteria for the post.

11. Use of Fixed Term and Temporary Contracts

Where the governing body, in conjunction with the headteacher, determines that posts are of a short- term nature, this will be clearly specified in the job description and in adverts. Posts will only be advertised on a temporary or fixed term basis for genuine temporary reasons which will be made explicit in the contract of employment. Where a fixed duration contract expires and the need for the post remains for a further definite period, then the post holder will usually be given an extension to their fixed period contract. The governing body will assure itself that contractual terms are explicit.

Where the need for a temporary or fixed term post becomes a permanent one, there will be no automatic entitlement for the temporary post holder to be offered the permanent contract. It will be for the governing body to consider and take advice on the most appropriate recruitment process in the circumstances.

12. Use of Supply Staff, Volunteers and Contractors

Safeguarding measures

- *The school will obtain written notification from any agency or third party supplier that they have carried out the checks that the school would normally carry out on any individual who will work at the school, including checks against the children's barred list where the individual will be working in regulated activity.*
- *The school will ensure that written notification confirms that the DBS check has been obtained by the employment agency.*
- *Where information is disclosed on an enhanced DBS certificate which the agency has received before the individual starts work at the school, the school must receive a copy of the certificate.*
- *The school will record a risk assessment of all volunteers to establish what checks are needed, specifically whether the volunteer will be in regulated activity and therefore whether a check against the barred list (in addition to the enhanced DBS check) is required. Any adhoc volunteering arrangements which do not meet the criteria for regulated activity will be supervised.*
- *The school will conduct identity checks on volunteers, contractors and supply staff, and check that the person presenting themselves at school is the same person on whom the checks have been made.*
- *Under no circumstances will a contractor or volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.*
- *The school will ensure that an enhanced DBS check is obtained for all governors, including a check against the children's barred list where the governor will be engaged in regulated activity. The school will conduct a section 128 check for all governors <u>including staff governors</u>.*
- *For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, the school will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where the school decides that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and these checks are not carried out, a record of the school's assessment will be retained, including an evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.*

The governing body recognises the rich variety of professional, highly skilled and committed people who contribute to the school, not all of whom are paid employees. The school values the diversity that this brings to its community as it strives to provide a safe environment and improve the standards of teaching and learning for all pupils. To ensure the continued high standards of contributions, we will:

- Use, as our preferred sources of supply staff, agencies accredited through the Quality Mark Scheme for agencies and LAs;
- Ensure that organisations providing contract staff comply with our safeguarding requirements and that this is set out in our contract with the organisation;
- Assure ourselves that contractors have the appropriate level of DBS check and are not engaging in regulated activity or working unsupervised with children without an enhanced DBS check including a check against the children's barred list;
- With appropriate adjustment, adopt similar recruitment measures for contractors and volunteers as for employees.

13. Employment of Migrant Workers

The school will not employ any individual who cannot demonstrate that they have the right to work in the UK. Any employee who has a restricted right to work in the UK will be required to provide evidence of that right at least once in every 12-month period.

The school is not currently licensed to sponsor migrant workers who require sponsorship in order to work in the UK under UK Border Agency rules.

14. Single Central Record

The school will as a minimum ensure that its Single Central Record includes details of checks conducted on all staff, including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency and third-party supply staff, even if they work for one day. The school will also include volunteers on it's SCR.

15. Monitoring

Mindful of its commitment to best practice in recruitment and its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and DfE safer recruitment guidance, the governing body will ensure regular monitoring of all recruitment activity. This will be undertaken with a view to improving future recruitment practices and thereby achieving the aims of this policy. The results of this monitoring and any recommended actions will be reported to the governing body on an annual basis.

16. Data Protection

Records relating to recruitment and selection activities will remain confidential and accessible only to those who require information either as part of the recruitment decision-making process or for the administration of the process (including monitoring activities for the purposes of this policy or equality policies). Records relating to successful candidates will be placed in personnel files. Records for unsuccessful candidates will be retained in a secure place for a period of six months, after which time they will be destroyed.