SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Approved by: SLT

Approved date: June 2025

Review date: June 2026

Accessibility: Available on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School,
Ashbridge Nursery Hutton, Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery,
Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, The Fledglings Nursery

Introduction and Ethos

Our staff teams are the lifeblood of Ashbridge. Parents and carers have contact with practitioners, managers, administrators and the wider staff team every single day so finding team members who are fantastic at customer service, as well as able to provide nurturing care and an inspiring environment for our children is very important.

Making sure that everyone who works at Ashbridge is suitable is essential to keep our children safe. All our recruitment processes follow Safer Recruitment guidelines and are in line with OFSTED, ISI and legal requirements. Any team members involved in the recruitment process undertake Safer Recruitment training and receive in-house training on all stages of the recruitment process.

This policy outlines our processes around recruitment and must be used in conjunction with the Onboarding Process Book and User Guide, which gives practical guidance for each step of the recruitment process.

Recruitment Process

This section relates to employees directly employed by Ashbridge School Ltd who work in the school or nurseries. Processes for other positions are detailed later in this document.

Advert

Jobs at Ashbridge are usually advertised through recruitment websites, and are sometimes also promoted through social media and the company website. All suitable roles are advertised both internally and externally. Adverts set out the skills, abilities, experience, attitude and behaviours required for the post as well as including the safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, the school and nursery's commitment to safeguarding and whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and associated amendments.

The advert will either have an application pack attached or direct candidates to request an application pack. Many candidates include a CV when they make their first enquiry and whilst this is useful in giving a general overview of the candidate, an application form will also always be required to formally apply for the role.

Application Pack

The application pack contains all the essential information for a potential candidate to gain a thorough understanding of the role including responsibilities and safeguarding requirements. The application pack includes:

- Application form
- Self-disclosure form for convictions
- Job Description and Person Specification
- Safeguarding statement
- Information about selection process

Shortlisting and Interview Preparation

For nursery posts, candidates are shortlisted by the Human Resources Team, based on relevant qualifications, experience and other supporting information. The Human Resources Team book interviews with candidates and provide all relevant information to the recruitment manager. For posts in school, the Headteacher or other relevant member of the management team may shortlist candidates.

An online search is carried out on the applicant by the recruiting manager or recruitment administrator as part of due diligence to help identify any incidents or issues which are publicly available online that we may want to explore more at interview. The date of the check is recorded on StaffSafe should the applicant be successful.

Prior to interview, shortlisted candidates are asked to complete a self-declaration form to disclose any relevant information such as a criminal history, prohibition from teaching or working with children or other relevant information.

Interview

Interviews of candidates are carried out by at least two members of the Nursery Management Team and/or Senior Leadership Team using a consistent set of structured questions. Candidates are expected to bring at least one form of identification, preferably photographic, to their interview.

Interview questions include finding out what attracted the candidate to the post, why they wish to work with children, their skills, qualifications and experience, probing any gaps in employment or frequent changes to employment and other questions directly related to working at Ashbridge. Interview notes are recorded in writing and candidates are given the opportunity to ask questions about the post and the company.

For teaching positions in school and where deemed necessary in nursery, candidates may be asked to undertake a lesson or spend time in the nursery classrooms. In school, pupils are also included in the recruitment process. When this occurs candidates are fully supervised and never left unattended. Candidates may also be given a tour of the school or nursery.

References

At least two references are always taken up and obtained directly from the referee. References are requested using digital signing platform, Signable, and followed up with a phone call to the referee to confirm the information is correct and check if there is any further information to be shared. References are checked against potential employees' records and obtained prior to confirmation of employment. For teaching staff or more senior roles in the nursery, references are taken up before interview.

A reference should be obtained from the most recent employer wherever possible. If the most recent employment did not involve working with children, a reference must also be obtained from the most recent employment where the candidate worked with children. For a new employee who has been out of work for some time, recruitment managers should discuss reference suitability with the Director of Compliance.

References must be provided by a manager or senior person rather than a colleague with a similar level of responsibility to the candidate. Candidates are requested to provide professional email addresses rather than personal addresses unless there is an exceptional circumstance. References or testimonials provided by a candidate are not acceptable. Whilst we use a standard reference request we recognise that many employers may respond using their own preferred format. Where a reference is provided that only provides basic information such as employment dates, or if a reference has been provided by a family member because they were the previous employer, we will attempt to gain additional more detailed references. In the case of a telephone reference being received, detailed notes will be taken and it will be made clear on the notes who was spoken to. Telephone references are always followed up with a written reference at the earliest opportunity.

Pre-appointment Vetting Checks

When a candidate is offered a role with Ashbridge, the offer is conditional until all vetting checks have been completed satisfactorily. The scrutiny of all new employees, regardless of whether they are working in regulated activity or not, is essential and includes the following employment checks, which are all carried out before employment with Ashbridge commences and recorded StaffSafe, from which the Single Central Register is generated:

Identity Checks

In addition to the identification shown at interview, identity checks are made against at least two different official and original documents as part of the pre-employment checks. These may include birth certificate (preferred document for checking name), passport, driving licence, recent utility bill etc. Photographic identity should be included wherever possible, together with evidence of current address.

DBS Checks

For all positions which involve regulated activity an enhanced DBS check inclusive of children's barred list check is required. Those not in regulated activity but with the opportunity for contact with children require an enhanced DBS check without barring information. This may include cleaners, gardeners and maintenance staff.

Employees may choose to join the DBS update service to ensure their certificate remains up to date, although this is not a requirement. Employees confirm in writing once a year and verbally twice a year that their suitability to work with children and DBS status has not changed.

Where an employee is already subscribed to the DBS update service we are required to see their original certificate and do a check on the update service. An update service check without the original certificate is not acceptable.

In the event of a DBS not arriving before a new employee is due to start work we may allow them to start if it is in the best interests of the children for them to commence employment. In this case we will ensure the DBS check is in progress with the DBS service, carry out a risk assessment, ensure they are fully supervised and make sure all other checks, including a separate Children's Barred List check, have been carried out. New employees who are subject to a DBS delay risk assessment will not be permitted to change nappies or support toileting, take photos and videos of children or access children's personal information other than dietary needs to support mealtimes.

Should a person be working without confirmation of a clear DBS check for more than four weeks, Line Managers are required to inform the Director of Compliance for further risk assessment.

Should an applicant disclose that they have convictions, or this is disclosed on the DBS certificate, the application must be referred to the Director of Human Resources to make an assessment on their suitability, as per the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy.

Medical Fitness

Candidates are required to complete a statement regarding their health and medical fitness and are asked at interview to declare any reason why they may not be able to fulfil the duties or role for which they have applied.

During pre-employment vetting, staff complete a medical questionnaire which is then updated annually. This medical questionnaire is only completed once a job offer has been accepted by the candidate.

Should any concerns be highlighted on the medical questionnaire, a staff support plan will be considered, and if approved, will be updated at least annually. The organisation will make reasonable adjustments to support staff to carry out their role. If it is felt necessary to support an employee, medical advice or assessment may be sought, with the consent of the employee.

Right to Work in the UK

Right to Work checks are carried on all employees, for all roles, including British Citizens. We follow the guidance set out by the UK Government regarding Right to Work checks, including rechecking staff when their Right to Work is due to expire. Additional checks may be carried out on teachers moving from overseas. Staff must never assume someone's Right to Work in the UK and carry out the same checks for all new employees.

Overseas Checks

If an employee has lived or worked overseas for a minimum of three months in the previous ten years, the applicant is required to attempt to obtain a police check from the country or countries they have previously lived. We provide the applicant with the relevant guidance from the UK Government website to assist them. Employees may start work without this check if they can evidence it has been applied for.

Checking Qualifications (where required in relation to Job Description/Role)

Candidates must provide an original certificate in a relevant childcare or teaching qualification, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body or institution. Copies of other qualification certificates are also held on file where applicable. Where original certificates or confirmations are not available a properly certified copy is required. Copies of these documents are taken before a person starts their employment and are stored on StaffSafe. Until confirmation of qualification status has been received staff will not be paid at the level of their claimed qualification and they will only be counted in ratios at the qualified level the organisation has evidenced.

Disqualification from Childcare

Employees who work directly with children in the early years, or within before and after school care for children aged under 8, are required to confirm they are suitable to work with children, in line with the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006. This declaration is updated annually and members of staff are asked in supervision meetings and appraisals if there have been any changes. If there are any changes between these times it is the responsibility of the member of staff to inform their Line Manager who will work with the SLT to take appropriate action in line with government guidance.

Prohibition from Teaching (School and EYTs only)

We use the DfE 'Check a Teacher's Record' to confirm that anyone employed to carry out teaching work in the school and qualified Early Years' Teacher in the nursery, is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State and this is logged on StaffSafe. This includes qualified freelance teachers and peripatetic teachers and teaching assistants in school who plan and carry out 'teaching' work. For teachers in school who have worked overseas, a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked will be obtained wherever possible.

Prohibition from Management

A prohibition from management (section 128 directions) check is made of new staff appointed to management positions in regulated activity, for both internal promotions and external appointments, via UK Government website. The following staff are considered to be in management positions for the purpose of this check.

- Headteacher
- All staff on the Senior Leadership Team (including non-teaching staff)
- Teaching positions with a departmental headship
- Nursery Managers and other roles within the nursery that the organisation deems to involve a level of management, such as company-wide Lead Practitioners.

Induction

Upon offer of employment, and before starting work, new employees undergo a thorough induction and training process which includes a Welcome Meeting, accessing key information and policies and undertaking Safeguarding, Prevent and any other relevant training. This is then followed up with an ongoing induction period to embed learning through the company's training portal, on the job training, external courses as needed and regular meetings and reviews. This process enables new employees to understand the requirements of their role and for Ashbridge to monitor suitability and provide training support where needed during the induction period.

Changing Roles including Promotion

If an existing employee changes their job title, hours or any other working agreements, an Employee Amendment Form is completed and directed to the Payroll department. The team member will also receive a new contract of employment reflecting the change. All details will be updated on StaffSafe and Connect as required to support.

Leaving Employment

Upon leaving the company, an Exit Interview is undertaken in which the employee is asked about their reasons for leaving and are given an opportunity to raise any concerns. All former staff records are archived on StaffSafe for seven years, or longer if required as detailed in the Retention of Records Policy. If a member of staff is dismissed or no longer engaged by the school and nursery and the DBS criteria is met, this will be reported promptly to DBS, DfE and OFSTED. In the case of a teacher being dismissed or one who would have been dismissed if they had not resigned, the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) will be informed where required. This includes supply staff, working in conjunction with their agency.

The Senior Leadership Team hold responsibility for aspects of these procedures and are fully aware of the need for vigilance, adherence to procedures and confidentiality where applicable.

Young Workers – including Apprentices

A Young Workers Policy is in place which provides detailed information about our recruitment, induction and safeguarding procedures for Young Workers, either as an apprentice or under general employment and this must be read in conjunction with policy to ensure working hours and the employment rights of young people are adhered to.

Team members joining the Ashbridge Apprenticeship scheme undertake a thorough onboarding process in line with all other staff members. During the induction process the organisation works closely with apprentices and partners at Runshaw College to provide high-quality training and ensure young apprentices are safeguarded.

This includes regular check-ins and formal reviews, monitoring of course progress and additional wellbeing support.

APPENDIX 1 – Students and Work Experience, Visiting Speakers, Supply Staff, Freelance Teachers, Volunteers, Contractors

Other categories of people who may work or volunteer at Ashbridge but not under our employment may be subject to some of the above checks or other procedures, as detailed below.

Students and Work Experience students under 18

Ashbridge offers high-school Work Experience placements for ex-pupils of Ashbridge Independent School only. Settings should ensure they only allow a suitable number of pupils on site each week. For the larger nurseries no more than 4-5 and for school and smaller nurseries no more than 2-3 is a good guide. The school is required to provide written confirmation of their work experience requirements and the expectations of Ashbridge whilst the pupil is on site. We provide the pupil with a copy of our visitors' checklist which includes information on the use of mobile devices, fire and lockdown procedures, safeguarding and first aid. A work experience induction is also completed on their first day. Work experience pupils are never left unaccompanied with children and do not serve food or undertake any intimate or personal care.

We do not normally offer college placements, due to our internal apprenticeship programme.

Visiting Speakers

Visiting speakers to school are checked where deemed necessary as set out in the Visitors policy, available on the organisation's website. Checks prior to their visit may be undertaken to ensure the visiting speaker's aims do not undermine British Values and that the content is suitable for our pupils and where required, recorded on the Single Central Register. They are supervised at all times whilst on site and identification is checked upon arrival.

Supply Staff

In the event of supply staff being used in nursery written confirmation is always obtained from the agency that all the required pre-employment checks have been carried out and that the enhanced DBS with children's barred list certificate has been seen. The member of supply staff will also be required to present ID upon arriving on site to verify their identity. All checks are stored securely and kept up to date by the Human Resources Team.

Peripatetic/Freelance Teachers

Peripatetic and freelance teachers fall under the category of 'staff' and are therefore required to undertake the same checks as direct employees of Ashbridge. Often, many of these checks will be confirmed in writing by a relevant body. Should a relevant external body confirm checks, these staff are still always required to provide ID and present their DBS certificate before commencing employment. If all relevant checks are not available from an overseeing body, they will be conducted by Ashbridge before employment is offered.

Volunteers – School only

The arrangements for volunteers varies by individual and the type of activity and we are guided by the information provided in the most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Where we assess that the individual will be in regulated activity; defined as being an unsupervised volunteer, whose presence is frequent and regular we obtain an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information together

those checks as deemed appropriate in line with Independent School and OFSTED Regulations. Identity, suitability and barred list checks, references and disqualification from teaching checks are carried out where appropriate. Each case is considered on an individual basis.

The SLT take a proportional risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary staff and volunteers but typical documents provided include policies relating to safeguarding, fire safety and health and safety, and key government guidance such as KCSIE and What to Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused.

With the exception of arrangements made before June 2025, the nurseries cannot accommodate volunteers.

Contractors, including consultants

Employees of contractors who are working at Ashbridge on a long term basis are subject to minimum checks of identity check on arrival, appropriate level of DBS check and barred list check for those in regulated activity. Written confirmation of all checks are required from the employing organisation and details held. Identity is also checked on arrival. Where a self-employed contractor is not checked by their professional associations, then we would undertake the required checks if deemed necessary. For contractors who are likely to spend a prolonged period of time on site, basic safeguarding information is provided, including the details of the DSLs. Short-term contractors are always supervised when on site.

APPENDIX 2 – Documents and training for staff other than nursery practitioners

	Role				
List of policies/activities	Teachers and school based staff	Office staff (not desk staff)	Kitchen team	Cleaners	Front of House Team
Safeguarding					
Safeguarding Slides	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Keeping Children Safe in Education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ACEs video	Yes	No	No	No	No
Emotional Abuse video	Yes	No	No	No	No
Physical Abuse video	Yes	No	No	No	No
Sexual Abuse video	Yes	No	No	No	No
Neglect video	Yes	No	No	No	No
Child Criminal Exploitation video	Yes	No	No	No	No
Child Sexual Exploitation video	Yes	No	No	No	No
Safeguarding Children Missing from Education	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Whistleblowing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anti-Bullying	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Behaviour	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Behaviour Management Quiz	Yes	No	No	No	No
Technology and Online Safety	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lockdown	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Prevent Duty	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prevent Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Level 1 Safeguarding and CAFCON Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prevent Training	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Health and Safety					
General Nursery Safety video	No	No	No	No	Yes
Lifting Babies video	No	No	No	No	Yes
Lifting Children video	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Counting Children video	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Risk Assessment video	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
First Aid policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fire Action poster	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Using a CO2 Extinguisher video	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Using a Foam Extinguisher video	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Using a Powder Extinguisher video	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Using a Water Extinguisher video	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Food Hygiene Training Presentation	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Colour coded system COSHH	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Roles, Responsibilities and Practice					
Code of Conduct	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Online Safety Awareness	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Privacy Notice	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Staff Handbook	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
School Parent Handbook	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Nursery Parent Handbook	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
EYFS Curriculum	Yes in Infants	No	No	No	No
Key Person policy	Yes in Infants	No	No	No	No
Talking to Children video	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
The Power of Play video	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Risky Play video	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Characteristics of Effective Learning Quiz	Yes in Infants	No	No	No	No
EYFS General Knowledge Quiz	Yes in Infants	No	No	No	No
Diversity and Equal Opportunities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEND	Yes	No	No	No	No
Supporting Children with SEN Quiz	No	No	No	No	No
Conflict Resolution	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Working with Parents Quiz	No	No	No	No	No

Additional Training to Consider				
Teachers and school based staff	Office staff (not desk staff)	Kitchen team	Cleaners	Front of House Team
Subject specific training	Customer Focussed	Food Hygiene	Manual Handling	Customer Focussed
		Manual Handling	Cleaning Safely	
			Working at Height	