



Recruitment, Selection and Disclosures Policy and Procedures

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Date of last revision: September 2022

Date to be revised: September 2023

Elstree School is a Company Limited by Guarantee No 690450 (England)

Purpose and aims

Elstree School is committed to ensuring the best possible environment for the children and young people in its care. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is our highest priority. Elstree is also committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment to all staff.

Elstree recognises that in order to achieve this purpose, as well as the need for an objective and transparent process which complies with statutory obligations, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share these commitments.

Elstree aims:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of merit, ability and suitability for the post, who are in sympathy with the Elstree's values and ethos.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equitably and consistently
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity leave, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant recommendations and guidance including the recommendations of the Department for Education (DfE) Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) document, the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Equality Act (2010)
- To attract and recruit suitable skilled and motivated staff to help raise standards and reduce the risk to children and young people.
- To ensure that Elstree meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks as obliged by statute and through questions asked at interview.

Responsibility for Recruitment

Human Resources (HR) will take the lead responsibility for securing the best field of candidates; advising on recruitment and selection matters. HR will work in partnership with the recruiting manager.

Staff involved in the recruitment and selection process are responsible for familiarising themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy.

At least one member of each interview panel must have successfully completed Safer Recruitment in Education training.

Establishing the need to recruit

When a post falls vacant, the requirement for the post to be retained in its existing form must be reviewed by the Headmaster or Bursar. Considerations about the nature of the post such as hours and responsibilities should be determined by the recruiting manager in conjunction with HR and the SLT and agreed before the recruitment process commences.

To initiate the recruitment process, an Authorisation to Recruit Form is prepared. In addition, the following information must also be prepared and retained in HR:

- Job Description
- Person Specification
- A draft job advertisement

Recruitment procedure

Preparing to recruit

As stated in the Safer Recruitment in Education guidance having a clear job description and person specification, setting down the boundaries and expectations of the role are all features of a safer recruitment process.

Job description and person specification

The job description and person specification should normally form part of the recruitment pack, which is sent to prospective applicants in the form of a Candidate Pack. These documents require careful drafting to ensure that the criteria listed are accurate.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are contained within the candidate pack define the purpose, duties and responsibilities of the post as well as the qualifications and experience needed to perform the role, with particular attention to working with vulnerable groups. The recruitment literature enables Elstree to choose objectively between candidates on the basis of their relevant skills and ambition with the objective of selecting the best candidate with reference to Elstree's commitment to the safeguarding of children and young people.

Planning the recruitment process

The Headmaster or Bursar and HR should agree the following:

- Methods of selection;
- Interview panel members;
- Who will be involved in short-listing (usually the Headmaster/Bursar and the recruiting manager/head of department);
- If any other selection techniques are required (such as tests or a presentation at interview), who will be required for these;
- Selection dates and times;
- The use of recruitment agencies where appropriate.

Advertising the role

Preparing the advert

The recruiting manager should liaise with HR to consider and discuss generating applications from high quality candidates. The recruiting manager in conjunction with HR should complete the job advertisement with close reference to the Job Description and Person Specification. In addition, advertisements should normally contain the following information:

- Job title;
- Annual Salary (if appropriate);
- Location;
- Standard information about Elstree;
- Outline of the main responsibilities
- Outline of the main skills, qualifications and experience required (based on the Person Specification for the post);
- Statement on safeguarding;
- Contact details for further information regarding the post and how to apply;
- Start date (if appropriate);
- Closing date;
- Interview date, where agreed.

The membership of the interview panel and an interview date should ideally be agreed at this stage.

Internal and external advertisements

Vacancies are promoted internally as appropriate to ensure existing employees have the opportunity to apply.

If an advert is to be placed in the external media HR and the line manager or Headmaster/Bursar will produce the advert. All application forms should be acknowledged (normally this will be carried out by HR) at the time of application.

Following the interview process, unsuccessful candidates will receive written confirmation and thanks for their interest.

Recruitment information for candidates

The following documents will be on the recruitment area of the website:

- Job Advert and information about the post – in the form of a Candidate Pack
- Elstree Application form
- Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form
- Recruitment and Disclosure Policy and Procedures
- Recruitment Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy

It may be appropriate in some circumstances to advertise roles internally to enable existing colleagues to apply for additional responsibilities or new roles. Information about these roles will be published via the internal network and documentation with further information being available from HR.

Shortlisting process

Application forms

All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. Applications will only be considered if submitted on an Elstree application form, incomplete applications, CVs or application forms cross referenced to CVs will not be accepted as a substitute.

Short-listing should be carried out as soon as possible after the closing date and applications must be measured against the requirements detailed in the Candidate Pack.

Panel members should rate the candidate's application against the Candidate Pack and experience required for the role. When the panel members have agreed whom they wish to interview, they should inform HR, who will invite the candidates to the selection event. The Panel Chair is responsible for ensuring that justifiable and objective reasons are provided for any applicants not selected for interview. Short-listing information will be retained by HR for six months to ensure feedback is available at a later date if requested.

Candidates will be contacted inviting them to attend the selection event with details of the selection methods and directions on how to get to the School. Candidates will be asked to bring original documentation to verify their qualifications, DBS information, overseas checks (where necessary), Right to Work in the UK evidence and confirmation of identity. Where a candidate states to have changed their name by deed poll or other mechanism (e.g. by marriage, adoption or statutory declaration), they will be asked to provide documentary evidence of the change. Candidates will also be asked whether any adjustments may be necessary in order for them to attend the selection event.

Where originals or certified copies of a candidate's educational qualifications are not available, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained by the candidate from the awarding body.

If short listed, candidates will be subject to an online search – see below for more details. On inviting to attend interview, candidates will be asked for details of their online profile including account names and social media handles. This information must be provided by the applicant in order for their application to continue. The candidate will not be asked for login details. An independent review by HR will check the last 5 years' information identifying any posts which may present a risk to children or young people or may demonstrate an extreme viewpoint in accordance with the Counter Terrorism Act of 2015 and will be discussed with the candidate as part of their Safer Recruitment Interview.

In accordance with the Childcare Act 2006 and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2018 and specifically the implications of the disqualification sections, short listed candidates will also be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Shortlisted applicants will be asked to sign the declaration to confirm that the information they have provided is true. The purpose of a self-declaration is so that candidates will have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

References will be taken up on short listed candidates prior to interview where possible. This applies to internal as well as external applicants. If it has not been possible to obtain a reference prior to interview it will be reviewed upon receipt.

Selection Process

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the post. Applicants for teaching posts will be required to undertake an interview lesson observation and will also be invited to attend an interview. Generally, interviews are in person, however, in some circumstances, interviews may be conducted remotely.

Panel interviews

To support the principles of equality and transparency, panel interviews should be the norm. One to one interviewing should only be conducted after consultation with HR and with the express permission of the Headmaster.

The Headmaster/Bursar or recruiting manager/head of department will normally act as the Chair of the interview panel. The purpose of this role is as follows:

- Welcome the candidates, explain the format and the interview and introduce panel members;
- Ensure the interviews keep to the allocated time;
- Co-ordinate the panel members and the order of questioning;
- Ensure that the candidates have an opportunity to ask questions of the panel members;

Safer Recruitment Interview

Applicants selected for interview will undertake a safer recruitment interview which will last for approximately 30 minutes. This will ensure that the appropriate questions concerning pre-employment checks, gaps in employment history and compliance are carried out in accordance with government guidance, our policies and procedures and safer recruitment best practice. Candidates will be able to demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young

people. Any areas arising from the online checks will be discussed in this forum. A Safer Recruitment in Education Interview Form will be completed and act as a record of the interview.

Remote interviews

Occasionally an *initial* interview may be held with candidates who cannot attend the School site (e.g. overseas candidates). These will follow standard interview procedures and if the candidate is considered suitable, will normally be followed up with an interview and activities on site before an offer of employment is made.

Online Searches

In addition to the checks set out below, Elstree reserves the right to obtain such formal or informal background information about an applicant as is reasonable in the circumstances to determine whether they are suitable to work at the School. In accordance with paragraph 221 of KCSIE this will include online searches on shortlisted candidates. The online searches Elstree carries out may include searches of internet search engines, websites and social media platforms. When invited for interview, applicants are asked to provide details of their online profile, including account names and social media handles. This information will be used to carry out online searches. Applicants are not required to provide account passwords or to grant the School access to private social media accounts.

Online searches may be carried out at the shortlisting stage or after an offer of employment has been made (but prior to work commencing). We will not carry out online searches as part of our initial sift of applications.

Elstree will determine how it approaches online searches on a case by case basis. However, all applicants for a role at the School will be treated consistently with regard to online searches.

In carrying out online searches the School is looking for any publicly available information about an applicant that:

- may be relevant to their suitability to carry out the role for which they have applied;
- may be relevant to their suitability to work at the School or in an education setting;
- is of a safeguarding nature; and / or
- may have an impact on the School's reputation (whether positive or negative)

Any information generated from online searches will be entered in an 'Online search results record'. Where online searches are undertaken on shortlisted applicants any relevant information generated will be provided to the interview panel for discussion with shortlisted applicants at interview. Where online searches are undertaken on the successful applicant only any relevant information generated will be discussed prior to employment commencing. All offers of employment will be conditional upon the School being satisfied that the successful applicant is suitable to work at the School in light of any information generated from online searches.

In evaluating any online information for relevance the School will use the following criteria:

- whether the information is relevant to the position applied for;
- whether the information is relevant to the applicant's suitability to work at the School or in an education setting;
- whether the information could have an impact on the School's reputation (whether positive or negative);
- whether the information calls into doubt the applicant's willingness or ability to uphold the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- the length of time since the information became publicly available and whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the information was published;
- whether the information reveals a pattern of concerning behaviour; and

- the relevant circumstances and the explanation(s) offered by the applicant.

For successful candidates, the School will retain information generated through online searches for the duration of the individual's employment and in accordance with its Policy after employment ends.

For unsuccessful candidates, the School retains the information generated from online searches for six months from the date on which they are informed their application was unsuccessful, after which it will be securely destroyed.

Making a decision after the selection event

Summary of interview / presentation

The Panel members should take their own notes throughout the interview and/or presentation. After each interview the Panel will agree on their preferred candidate(s) to progress to offer stage. This information will be recorded and all interview notes are to be retained by HR. These notes may be used to provide feedback to candidates. All other notes should be destroyed at the end of the process.

Making an employment offer

Conditional offers should be made by HR in agreement with the Headmaster/Bursar or the recruiting manager once the formal interview process has been completed. This offer will then be confirmed in writing by HR. The offer letter will state that it is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks being received and cleared. Any offer should be made with advice and guidance from HR.

Contracts of employment will be issued after the relevant pre-employment checks have been completed and confirmed and are generally issued as the candidate has begun employment with the School.

Candidates who are not selected after the selection event may be told verbally, but this should be confirmed in writing by HR.

Pre-employment checks

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE, the requirements of the ISSRs and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, Elstree carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective staff.

In fulfilling its obligations to carry out pre-employment checks Elstree 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, gender reassignment, disability or age.

If Elstree decides to make an offer of employment following the interview, the offer will be conditional on the following:

- The identity of the applicant including photographic ID has been verified, through sight of a current passport, birth certificate or photo driver's licence. These should be copied, signed and retained;
- Any qualification which has been cited on the application form, whether relevant to the role or otherwise has been verified, preferably at interview by presentation of original certification. These should be copied and signed, and retained with the recruitment documentation;
- Verification of the applicant's employment history

- Elstree being satisfied that any information generated through online searches does not make the applicant unsuitable to work in the school;
- At least two references are considered satisfactory and follow up telephone calls have been made to check authenticity and clarify anything vague or ambiguous (as stated below).
- Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check;
- A barred list check;
- Eligibility to work in the UK
- Any overseas checks where applicable which may include an overseas criminal records check or certificate of good conduct or professional references so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered;
- Driving licence verification should be gained for any staff required to drive as part of their employment;
- Regulatory and compliance checks such as Prohibition Orders (Section 142) or Section 128 Orders which are in force at the time of making the offer and are appropriate to the role;
- Confirmation that the applicant is not disqualified from working in connection with early or later years provision if applicable;
- Medical checks appropriate to the candidate's role with follow up to Occupational Health for advice and guidance where necessary;

Seeking references

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by Elstree. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Referees should not be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children then the second referee should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children, where applicable.

Referees will be asked to confirm:

- Their relationship with the candidate, how long has the referee known the candidate and in what capacity.
- The candidate's suitability for working with children and young people.
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time expired warnings that relate to the safeguarding of children.
- The candidate's suitability for the post

In accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, HR contacts previous employers to verify the content of the reference and to confirm the applicant's suitability to work with children. The Standards also require Elstree to ensure direct contact (usually by telephone) is made with the referees of any person applying for a post working with Boarders. The school goes beyond those standards by making direct inquiries with referees of applicants for all posts.

The school will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant. Where the candidate has no previous employment history, Elstree may request character references which may include references from the candidate's school or university.

Employees are entitled if requested to view their employment references.

Disclosure and Barring Service check

Due to the nature of our work, Elstree will apply for Disclosure and Barring Service checks from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in respect of all prospective staff members, governors and volunteers. Posts within schools are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (updated guidance March 2014), therefore as a prospective employer, we encourage candidates to disclose any unspent and spent convictions during the application stage.

All roles at Elstree are classed as being in 'regulated activity' which means the school will request an enhanced disclosure from the DBS. This check will contain details of all convictions, adult cautions, reprimands, or warnings (except those which are "protected" as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974(Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment (England and Wales) Order 2013 and amended in 2020 held on the Police National Computer. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service website.

The Enhanced Check with Barred List will also reveal whether the individual is barred from working with children by virtue of their inclusion on the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children. An Enhanced Check may also contain non-conviction information from local police records which a Chief Police Officer thinks may be relevant in connection with the matter in question

From 17th June 2013 onwards, new certificates will be applied for prospective staff members who are not registered with the Update Service and who do not hold a current DBS check. For prospective staff members who are registered with the update service, written consent will be obtained to approach the Update Service to check and verify their registration.

The school takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member and/or successful candidate who is aware of anything that may affect their suitability to work with children must notify HR immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings they may receive. Failure to declare any convictions (that are not subject to DBS filtering) may disqualify a candidate for appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light subsequently and may also be a criminal offence.

Disclosure of a criminal record may not debar a candidate from appointment as Elstree shall consider the nature and severity of the offence, how long ago and at what age it was committed, whether it was a repeated or singular offence and any other relevant factors. Information should be submitted in confidence enclosing details in a separate sealed envelope marked 'confidential'. If candidates would like to discuss this beforehand, they are asked to please telephone in confidence to the Head of HR for advice. Elstree will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. Each case will be decided on its merits and in accordance with objective assessment criteria and a risk assessment is produced and signed by the Headmaster before a position is offered.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a Disclosure, they can do so by contacting the DBS directly. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the school will, where practicable, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the Disclosure information.

Delayed DBS checks

The School may in exceptional circumstances make reasonable safeguards including obtaining a barred list check if an employee's DBS check is mislaid or delayed in the post and the School has been advised by a registered umbrella body that it contains no information. The prospective member of staff should be paired with or supervised by another member of staff who has received DBS clearance. These arrangements are reviewed fortnightly.

Overseas candidates

Applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence may also be asked to apply for the equivalent of a disclosure, if one is available in the relevant jurisdiction(s).

Rehabilitation of offenders disclosure

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the School to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare under the statutory guidance "Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (July 2018)".

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the School. The School will report the matter to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- the School receives an application from a disqualified person;
- is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application; or
- the School has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the School will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- in the case of disqualification from providing childcare, whether the applicant has or is able to obtain an Ofsted waiver from disqualification; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving.

Recruitment of other staff

Supply staff

The School expects supply/temporary workers' agencies/contractors that are used by Elstree to register with the DBS on their own account and to provide written confirmation that all relevant checks have been carried out in respect of staff supplied to the school. Proof of DBS registration will be required to be seen by the school before the school will commission services from any such organisation.

The agency must also ensure that the supply staff member is aware that they have to bring in their DBS Certificate, proof of qualifications (e.g., QTS Certificate) and identification documents (proving their name, date of birth and address) on the first day of their supply work at Elstree. Elstree will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by such an agency and provide Safeguarding information. The school reserves the right to terminate the contract with the agency and send home an agency staff member without notice should these terms of safe recruitment practice be breached by the agency or the member of agency staff.

Volunteers

Under no circumstances should a volunteer on whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity. Whilst acknowledging the important role volunteers undertake in school and in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidelines, volunteers including governors will undergo checks commensurate with their work in the school and contact with pupils. All volunteers including governors are sign to confirm they have received, read, understood and agreed to follow a copy of the Safeguarding and Prevent policy and other key policies.

Supervised volunteers

Volunteers who work only in a supervised capacity and are not in regulated activity will undergo the safe recruitment checks appropriate to their role, in accordance with the school's risk assessment process and statutory guidance.

Contractors

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on site and requests DBS checks and barred list checks as required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks to the School's satisfaction will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity.

Visiting Speakers

Visiting speakers are required to undergo the safer recruitment check appropriate to their role and in accordance with the School's risk assessment process and statutory guidance. The School may also conduct internet searches in line with the Visiting Speaker Policy to establish speaker's suitability.

Retention and security of disclosure information

Elstree will observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the issue and retention of disclosure information and complies with the provisions of the DBS code of practice.

DBS documentation is retained on file for safeguarding audit purposes with the employee's consent.

Medical questionnaires and other relevant information should be kept by the HR Department and seen only by School medical staff and referred if necessary to the Headmaster/Bursar

It is Elstree's policy that all key staff with close links to pupils and boarding pupils in particular will have an updated DBS check every 3 years. This will include:

- All members of the Leadership Team
- Designated Safeguarding lead and Deputy Safeguarding leads
- House staff
- Health Centre Staff
- Adults living in a building which houses boarders and are employed by the School but excluding Gap students

Retention of records

If an applicant is appointed, the information on the recruitment file will be transferred to their HR File. For unsuccessful applications the documentation relating to the application will be collated and stored by HR and normally be confidentially destroyed by HR after six months.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in the light of any significant new developments or in response to changes in guidance.

Associated Policies

Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
Recruitment Privacy Policy