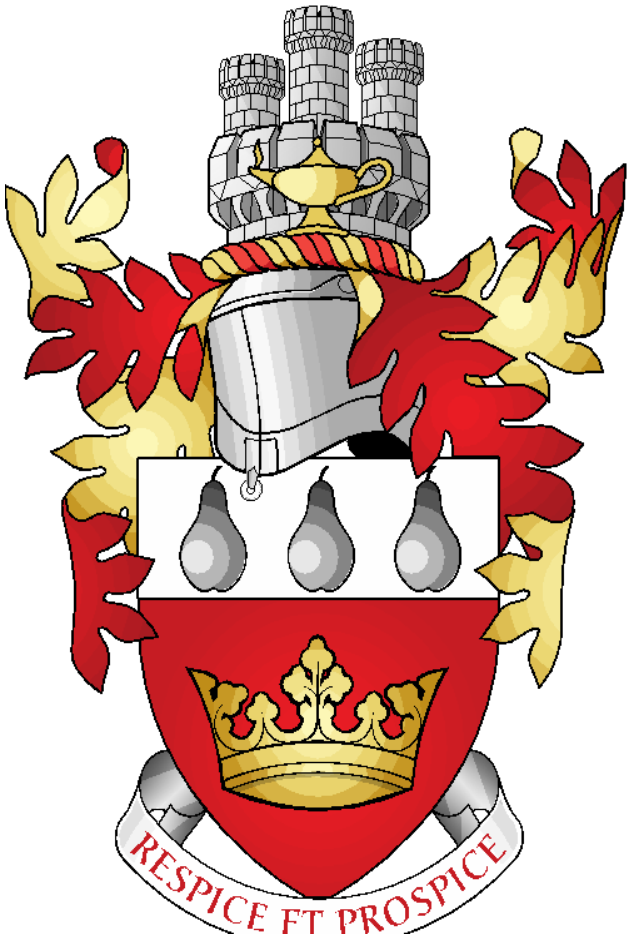

Safer Recruitment Policy

October 2026

RGSW Safer Recruitment Policy

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children. RGSW* is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This is to be achieved through effective recruitment and retention of competent, motivated staff members who are suited to and competent in their roles. RGSW recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse workforce comprising different backgrounds, skills and abilities. As such it is committed to a recruitment and selection process that is systematic, efficient, effective and equal. RGSW is committed to equality of opportunity and will not unlawfully discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

We welcome applications from candidates with diverse backgrounds, identities, experiences and perspectives.

This policy has been written with reference to the Department for Education's statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* (KCSIE 2026) and associated legislation.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the practice of safe recruitment of staff appointed to RGSW. It also sets out the minimum requirements to:

- attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- deter prospective applicants unsuitable for work with children;
- identify and reject applicants unsuitable for work with children.

Practices

The following procedures and practices are in place to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.

Stage 1 - Advertising and Inviting applications

All advertisements for all posts will clearly stipulate the stance adopted by RGSW by the inclusion of the following statement:

RGSW is committed to cultivating and preserving a culture of inclusion and connectedness. We are able to grow and learn better together with diverse staff. The collective sum of the individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, innovation, self-expression and talent that our staff invest in their work represents not only part of our culture, but our reputation and RGSW's achievements as well. In recruiting for staff, we welcome the unique contributions that you can bring in terms of your languages spoken, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and beliefs. We also want you to achieve your absolute best during the recruitment process. Please let us know of any changes we can make at any point that will help support you in completing an application.

Stage 2 - Applications

Prospective applicants can access all relevant information about each School via the relevant vacancies' sections on their respective websites. All applications where possible are to be made

online rather than in paper format. (This is to enable the effective storage and control of applicant data as per the RGSW Data Retention Policy.)

The online application requires all applicants to complete all relevant sections;

- Full work history
- Full education and employment history
- Provide at least 2 references
- Applicants are also required to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Applicants must account for any gaps in employment or education history. Any unexplained gaps will be explored and clarified during shortlisting or interview in line with KCSIE 2026. At least one referee must be the applicant's current or most recent employer and where the applicant has previously worked with children, this referee must be from that employment.
Applicants are provided with information about;

- School information and setting;
- Department Information (if appropriate);
- Job description
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Privacy Notice for Applicants

Where paper applications are requested and/or submitted, these are screened by HR to ensure that they are properly completed and then added to the online 'job' on the recruitment database manually. (The online application form can only be submitted once complete.)

Stage 3 - Applicant Selection/ Short-Listing

All applications received will be scrutinised in a systematic way by the short-listing panel and candidates deemed suitable for the post will be short-listed following consultation between the Teacher or Manager leading the recruitment process and other relevant staff. Where there is a high volume of applicants for a post it may be necessary to long-list in the first instance and introduce an additional stage to the recruitment process. HR will prepare shortlisting grids for use by recruiting managers as appropriate.

Telephone or online interviews may be used at the short-listing stage to establish suitability for interview, particularly where a high volume of applicants are received, but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face meeting as part of the final selection/interview process.

Pre-Interview Checks

References are taken up for all shortlisted candidates before interview so that any concerns can be explored with the candidate at interview. If, exceptionally, a reference has not been received by the interview, the Head of HR will record why, and the reference will be received and scrutinised before any offer is confirmed. (Should a candidate progress to selection and interview stage prior to their receipt, satisfactory references will always be taken up prior to any appointment being made. This will normally be completed by HR.) In addition, shortlisted candidates are also required to complete a criminal convictions declaration form. In line with KCSIE 2026, RGSW will conduct online searches of shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that may call into question their suitability to work with children. Online

searches will not be used as a general trawl of private life and will be limited to information relevant to suitability to work with children, professional conduct, safeguarding, reputation, honesty or role-related risk. Searches will be proportionate, limited to publicly available information and recorded as part of recruitment documentation. This may be conducted by a member of the HR team and results should be recorded as part of recruitment documentation and discussed with the candidate at the safer recruitment interview if necessary. Where possible, the person conducting the search should not be a decision-maker on the appointment panel, and should provide only relevant, job-related and safeguarding-related findings to the panel.

Those conducting online searches must be confident of the following:

- That the information obtained/found relates to the correct person
- That the information disclosed does not relate to any protected characteristics
- That searches are conducted in the same way for all candidates

Stage 4 - Interview

Candidates selected for interview will undergo a separate Safer Recruitment Interview and where possible that is separate from the main role focussed interview. For all Academic and Academic Support staff, the panel must include a member from the SLT who is fully trained In Safer Recruitment. For all other Support staff, the panel must include a member of the Support Managers Group who is fully trained.

In all cases they will be asked to provide:

- photographic proof of identity
- proof of right to work in the UK (Normally a birth certificate or passport for UK nationals)
- proof of qualifications as evidenced on their application form and required for the post applied for
- to have completed a signed declaration form confirming they are not restricted from working with children
- asked to explain any gaps in their employment history
- and if they have lived or worked outside of the UK for more than 3 months in the last 10 years

If any of the above documentation is not presented at interview, then any offer of employment made is conditional and subject to pre-employment checks only, until such evidence has been verified, normally by HR.

The interview process will seek to assess candidates in terms of whether their appointment would be in line with safer recruitment and fulfil the requirements of the post. Interviews may take a variety of formats to help recruiting managers assess the skills of candidates. For example, a competency-based interview, computer-based task, group exercise or prioritisation activity may be conducted. Evidence must be gathered against both the technical and behavioural competencies that are most relevant for that post and retained in the successful candidate's file.

Significantly, in terms of safer recruitment practices, at least one representative involved in the interview process will have successfully completed safer recruitment training and conduct a probing Safer Recruitment Interview, with the aim being to have one further interviewer present to watch the responses given by the applicant. The template for the Safer Recruitment part of the

interview process is included as Appendix 1 and this both records the verification of identity and professional background and probes the motivations for working with children, their emotional maturity, values and ethics. (A list of staff across the Schools who have completed the Safer Recruitment training through Educare is available from HR.)

To summarise, a Safer Recruitment Interview Form (Appendix 1) will be completed for all RGSW staff appointments and an ID badge issued by HR once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed and the Single Central Record updated. HR will also ensure that in conjunction with the Pastoral team, new employees will be booked on Safeguarding Training within the first half term that they commence in post if they have not attended a training session already prior to starting. In these circumstances, new employees will be provided with a Safeguarding leaflet. This will ensure that all employees are aware of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies and where to locate them.

Stage 5 - References

References are sought directly from the referees via the relevant Schools' recruitment portal or email/post. References or testimonials provided by the candidate are never accepted. Open references, such as those addressed 'To whom it may concern', will not be accepted. At least one reference must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Where the applicant has worked with children, that employer must be asked about suitability to work with children.

In all cases where applicants are invited to interview and there are anomalies or discrepancies on a reference provided, referees will be contacted by telephone or e-mail to clarify.

A written note will be kept of such exchanges and retained on the personnel file of the individual appointed. Furthermore, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies if needed and again a detailed written note of such exchanges will be retained on the personnel file of the individual appointed.

Stage 6 - Successful Candidates

For successful candidates, the following pre-employment checks will be completed prior to taking up the post. This will normally be completed by HR;

- verification of the candidate's identity;
- verification of the candidate's eligibility to live and work in the UK;
- receipt of at least two satisfactory references. Where a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, the School will consider what further checks are appropriate, taking into account the role, country, duration, recency, availability of overseas criminal record checks or certificates of good conduct, and any other safeguarding information reasonably available.
- completion of the Early Years declaration form if working in the Prep Schools;
- the level of DBS check, and whether children's barred list information is requested, will be determined by the role and whether the individual will be engaging in regulated activity. Barred list information will only be requested where the role is eligible.
- for anyone carrying out teaching work, a satisfactory check using the DfE 'Check a teacher's record' service for any prohibition, interim prohibition or restriction, and of teacher status where QTS is required;
- verification of the candidate's medical fitness to work to be completed online via Health Assured;

- verification of qualifications;
- verification of professional status where required, including QTS and teacher prohibition checks
- Section 128 checks will be completed and recorded for those taking part in the management of The RGS Family of Schools, including the proprietor/governors where applicable, Heads, members of the Senior Leadership Team, and any other staff whose responsibilities amount to management for these purposes. HR will assess eligibility and method of checking in accordance with current KCSIE guidance.

- Online screening to assess suitability of working with children. (See Stage 3 above.)

Gov.uk is utilised for the purposes of carrying out checks as required. The manager responsible for the recruitment of a new member of staff will ensure that the induction and health and safety checklist is filled in and returned to HR upon completion and prior to the probation end date.

Stage 7 - Induction

All staff who are new to RGSW are required to undertake induction training in line with the RGSW Induction Policy. This will include the following:

- Health and Safety training;
- Safeguarding training;
- Provision of Part One of the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, confirmation that this has been read and understood, and provision of the School's Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and related safeguarding procedures.
- Signing off on an induction checklist.

Stage 8 - Leaving the employment of RGSW

Under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the School must refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone it removes from regulated activity (or who would have been removed had they not left) because they harmed a child or posed a risk of harm. Employees at a school who are dismissed, who resign in circumstances which may have led to dismissal, or where a disciplinary transfer has occurred on grounds of misconduct which harmed or placed a child at risk of harm will be referred to the Disclosures and Barring Service: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs

Where the individual is a teacher, the School will also consider whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency is required where dismissal, resignation or ceasing to use the person's services relates to serious misconduct.

This will only be done following consultation with relevant senior management, to specifically include the appropriate DSL and following advice from appropriate external bodies.

Notes:

RGSW will:

- maintain a central record of recruitment and vetting checks, in line with the ISI's requirements (see below) known as the Single Central Record (SCR). Individuals will be removed from the Single Central Record once they no longer work at, or are no longer

engaged by, the School, subject to any separate personnel or safeguarding record retention requirements.
- require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the School to notify the Head or Director of Finance and Operations in writing of the offence and penalty
- ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure, in line with the School's Contractors' Policy.

The school will monitor the compliance with these measures and:
- respond to changes in legislation required to ensure the safeguarding of children
- review policy and practice in the light of developments
- carry out an annual review of this policy (or more frequently if key changes in legislation or ISI requirements necessitate this).

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and in individual personnel files, a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept, with the Head of HR for RGSW having responsibility for its input and maintenance alongside other appropriate staff in HR and undertaking regular audits.

This Single Central Record contains details of checks for:

- all staff who are employed to work at the school
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors who also work as volunteers within the school, and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g. a specialist sports coach, peripatetic staff and agency/cover staff.
- Volunteers: any volunteer who works with children on more than three days in any 30-day period, or overnight, must have an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information before starting, whether or not they are supervised (KCSIE 2026; the supervision exemption was removed by the Crime and Policing Act 2026). Existing volunteers who meet this test will have a barred list check. Other volunteers will be risk assessed and the decision recorded.

<u>Rehabilitation of Offenders Disclosure</u>

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA), as amended by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 and by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (new rehabilitation periods from 28 October 2023), sets when convictions become spent. Because work in a school is an exempt question under the ROA (Exceptions) Order 1975, applicants must disclose all unspent convictions and cautions, and any spent convictions and cautions that are not 'protected' (filtered) under the DBS filtering rules.

As such, candidates are advised that: *upfront disclosure of a criminal record may not debar you from appointment as we shall consider the nature of the offence, how long ago and at what age it was committed and any other relevant factors. Please submit information in confidence enclosing details in a separate sealed envelope which will be seen and then destroyed by the relevant Head or Director of Finance and Operations.*

Please disclose, on the School's self-declaration form, any unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings, and any spent ones that are not protected (filtered). Please note that the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Failure to declare any convictions (that are not subject to DBS filtering) may disqualify you for appointment or result in summary dismissal if the discrepancy comes to light subsequently.

All advertised positions contain the following statement:

Rehabilitation of offenders: This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. Which means that when applying for certain jobs and activities certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into account. Further information about filtering offences can be found in the DBS filtering guide.

Data Protection Issues

Personal data processed during recruitment will be handled in accordance with the School's privacy notices, Data Protection Policy and applicable data protection laws, including the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and, where applicable, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. Candidates may exercise their data protection rights in accordance with the School's privacy notices.

Supply Staff

For the purposes of creating the record of checks for supply staff provided through a supply agency, the school will request written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed all relevant checks. Access to the check is only required where there is information contained in the Enhanced DBS Disclosure. Information disclosed as part of an Enhanced DBS Disclosure will be treated as confidential. Photographic identity checks will be carried out by RGS to confirm that the individual arriving at the school is the individual that the agency has referred to.

Contractors

All RGS Schools currently employ permanent contractors for the services of catering. All new catering employees and the checks that have been completed by the contractor (currently Holroyd Howe) are declared to HR via email. The date this is received is recorded in the Single Central Record. Photo ID passes from HR are not provided to new contractor staff until checks are confirmed.

For visiting contractors such as decorators and building works specialists; where contractors staff have not undergone an Enhanced DBS check, they will not be left unsupervised with children. Supervision arrangements will be risk assessed and recorded, in line with KCSIE 2026.

Peripatetic Staff

For the purposes of creating the record of checks for peripatetic staff (for music, sports, tutors etc.) the school will require all necessary checks and DBS requirements are fulfilled.

This policy has been written with reference to the DfE's Publications Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Sponsor – Head of HR
June 2011
Reviewed and Endorsed by the Board of Governors: September 2012, August 2013, August 2014, February 2015, July 2015, August 2016, October 2017, August 2018, August 2019, September 2020 to reflect adaptations that may be required in the event of future 'lockdowns' and September 2021. Reviewed June 2022 - additional notes added regarding conducting online searches of candidates and the statement regarding rehabilitation of offenders made clearer Reviewed June 2023 - Inclusion statement updated and removal of adopted information for processes during COVID. Reviewed August 2024

Reviewed August 2025: links to KCSIE made clearer, details on purpose of online searches made clearer, contractor expectations more clearly defined, update that HR will create shortlisting grids as needed. Reviewed June 2026, specifics on data retention and checks added. Updated October 2026 for KCSIE 2026 (references before interview, open references, Check a teacher's record, volunteers, rehabilitation periods).

RGSW - Safer Recruitment Interview Record

Name of Candidate: _____

Position applied for: _____

Date: / /

To be completed for ALL Teaching and Support Staff roles.

RIGHT TO WORK IN UK/ID VERIFICATION		
Photo ID Provided:	Document provided (only originals can be accepted)	Seen by (initial)
Any document relevant to a change of name.		
Proof of entitlement to work in the UK: **UK/Irish Passport** **OR** **Birth Certificate with photo ID** **Right to work checks will be completed in accordance with current Home Office guidance, using an online share code check, a manual document check for eligible documents, or an approved Identity Document Validation Technology process where appropriate. Biometric residence permits and biometric residence cards will not be accepted as manual proof of right to work.**		

QUALIFICATIONS VERIFICATION	
Qualifications are relevant to the position applied for and commensurate to the application form?	Qualifications presented:
Is the application form filled in correctly. List gaps here: **(No gaps in employment without explanation.)**	

Please ensure application form is signed by applicant.	
Any history of living or working abroad for more than 3 months within the last 10 years? **List places worked here (abroad):**	

REFERENCE INFORMATION	
Reference 1 Notes: (Satisfactory, additional matters explored etc.)	**Reference 2 Notes:** (Satisfactory, additional matters explored etc.)

ONLINE SEARCH INFORMATION	
Information reviewed by safeguarding interview panel: Notes: (List points identified as necessary for further discussion and findings/recommendations)	**Yes/No**

SELF DECLARATION INFORMATION	
Completed, signed form reviewed by safeguarding interview panel: Notes: (List points identified as necessary for further discussion and findings/recommendations) **Please ensure declaration form is signed by applicant.**	**Yes/No**

To be completed for ALL Teaching and Support Staff applicants (one or more questions as appropriate, depending upon post applied for):

Positive Indicators	Sample questions - to pick one or two from each section, as appropriate	Negative Indicators
Proactive and has personally taken	**Safeguarding Knowledge** What is the safeguarding policy in your workplace?	No evidence of having taken steps

actions to improve safeguarding culture. Has personal experience of having appropriately dealt with a challenging safeguarding issue. Personally committed towards making improvements. Sees it as part of their job. Prepared to challenge others in the workplace to make tangible improvements to safeguarding. Prepared to tackle difficult issues and confront individuals if necessary in order to promote best practice. Shows a good understanding of the issues. Up to date with events and legislation. Knows about test cases.	How is it monitored? What steps have you taken to improve things in the last 12 months? Give me an example of when you have had safeguarding concerns about a child. Has this included any incidents of cyber bullying? How did it arise? Who did you speak to? What actions did you take? Have you ever had a situation where you felt you fell short of safeguarding standard? Follow up with: How did it arise? Who did you speak to? What actions did you take? Have you ever had to challenge the views of someone more senior than yourself in relation to safeguarding concerns? Follow up with: What were the circumstances? How did you go about it? What was the outcome? What does the term 'safeguarding' mean to you and whose responsibility is safeguarding? (CLEANING STAFF)	in own right to make improvements. Passive approach to safeguarding issues. Reluctance to challenge people/systems/processes to make things better. No real experience of handling safeguarding issues. Naive approach. Sees it as someone else's job and/or responsibility. Not well versed or clear in understanding of the issues. Intolerant of the bureaucracy around safeguarding. Shows tendency to take inappropriate chances/risks in areas of safeguarding.
Convincing responses based on balanced understanding of self and circumstances. Has a realistic knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses.	**Motivations for working with children / in a school.** What do you feel are the main drivers that led you to want to work with children or in a school? How do you motivate young people? What has working with young people taught you about yourself?	Unconvincing responses based on whimsical examples. Not self-aware, don't see themselves as others do.

A realistic appreciation of the challenges involved in working with children. Behaves consistently and appropriately under pressure or in a position of authority. Has control over emotions with children. Understands power position and how to seek help in difficult circumstances. Realises that allegations could be true as well as false Demonstrates self-awareness in terms of stress management. Acts on concerns and follows through.	**Emotional Maturity and Resilience** - Tell me about a time when you have been working with children when your authority was seriously challenged. How did you react? What strategies did you employ to bring things back on course? **ALWAYS ASK THIS QUESTION** What do you think about pupils who make allegations against staff? **Handling Pressure** Give an example of how you responded when a child's behaviour was challenging. How did this affect you and how did you cope emotionally with the aftermath? How do you know when to stop working? What do you do to switch off? **Promoting safeguarding and taking action** - What would you do if you saw or heard something you were concerned about regarding a pupil? (CLEANING STAFF)	Driven by personal needs not needs of others. Not realistic about personal strengths and weaknesses. Inappropriate responses when under pressure or when in a position of power. Inconsistent responses. Handles conflict badly. Assumes allegations against staff are false and/or malicious Fails to control temper/emotions with children. Doesn't seek help when needed and fails to go to others for advice. Concern that they may not be able to perform or cope under pressure. Unaware of the need to report concerns or take other appropriate action.

To be completed for Teachers (and Support Staff where applicable) - one or more questions as appropriate:

Integrity

1. Can you give me an example of a situation when you observed someone at work bending the rules in a way that made you feel slightly uncomfortable?

Self-awareness

2. Describe a situation where you had to deal with a child who didn't like you and how this made you feel and respond.

Handling pressure and stress, safeguarding judgement calls

3. A pupil comes up to you and says they want to speak to you in confidence; they are obviously in some distress. You are in an empty classroom; it is after school and everyone in your department has gone to the Common Room for coffee before going on to Parents' Evening in the Main Hall. What do you do?

Social Media

4. Make the candidate aware that an online search has/will be conducted in line with KCSIE 2026 guidelines to help assess their suitability to work with children in addition to advance referencing. Describe your digital footprint to us please and anything you would like to make us aware of or are concerned about. Ask about social media, including online gaming platforms and messaging services.

Completed by: …… (Signature)

Name: ……..

Completed by: …… (Signature)

Name: ……..

COMMENTS:
Satisfactory/Concerns:

THIS FORM MUST BE RETURNED WITH RECRUITMENT DOCUMENTS FOR FILE AS EVIDENCE