



Venture  
Learning

## Safer Recruitment Policy

Venture Learning

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## Policy Statement

### Introduction

Venture Learning is committed to providing the best possible care and education to its students and to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The school is committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment to all its employees. Venture Learning recognises that, in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share in this commitment.

The aims of Venture Learning's recruitment policy are as follows:

- To attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- To deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- To identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people;
- To ensure compliance with all relevant recommendations and guidance including the recommendations of the Department for Education (DfE) in "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025" and the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- To ensure that the school meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks;
- That employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

At least two people will be involved in each recruitment process, at least one will have successfully received accredited training in safer recruitment procedures at least every 2 years.

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## 1. INVITING APPLICATIONS

Advertisements for posts – whether in newspapers, journals or on-line – will include the statement:

“Venture Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and any appointment will be subject to safeguarding & pre-employment checks including enhanced DBS and successful references.”

The advert will also include whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 or not.

Prospective applicants will be supplied, as a minimum, with the following:

- job description
- person specification
- Our safeguarding statement
- Self disclosure form (to be completed if shortlisted)
- Our selection process outline which includes;
  - Which criteria we are looking for
  - That references will be obtained
  - That a DBS and other necessary checks will be obtained such as checking barred list, rights to work in the UK and online and social media profiles.
- the school's child protection policy; (refer to online version on the school website) and the safeguarding
- an application form which includes information regarding the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- **Applicants will be required to return their completed application form with a covering letter which states how their personal qualities and experience are relevant and suitable for the post advertised and how they meet the personal specifications.**

## 2. Recruitment and shortlisting procedure

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. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed.

A curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed application form. Applicants will receive a job description and/or person specification for the role applied for.

### 2.1 Shortlisting

Shortlisted applicant will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, for example:

- If they have a criminal history
- If they are included on the children's barred list
- If they are prohibited from teaching



- If they are prohibited from taking part in the management of an independent school
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales, not the law in their country of origin or where they were convicted.
- If they are known to police or children's local authority social care
- If they have been disqualified from providing childcare and,
- Any relevant overseas information.

Venture Learning will:

- ensure that at least two people carry out the shortlisting exercise, these staff members will ideally be the same for the interview for consistency
- consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them, and,
- explore all potential concerns
- **carry out an online search as part of due diligence on the shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that might have happened, and are publically available online. Candidates will be informed of this.**

## 2.2 Employment history and references.

Seeking references will allow Venture Learning to obtain factual information to support our appointment decisions. Venture Learning will seek references before the interview to allow any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

Venture Learning will:

- not accept open references e.g. to whom it may concern
- not rely on applicants to obtain their references
- ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority, this should be the head teacher/principal as accurate in respect of any disciplinary investigations
- obtain verification of the individual's most recent, relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- secure a reference from the relevant employer for the last time the applicant worked with children, if the applicant has never worked with children, then we will ensure we obtain a reference from their current employer
- always verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- ensure electronic references originate from legitimate sources
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- establish the reasons for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post and,
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed
- **expect referees to confirm whether they are satisfied with the applicants suitability to work with children and provide the facts of any substantiated safeguarding/allegations that meet the harm threshold.**



## 2.3 Interview

The applicant may then be invited to attend a formal interview at which their relevant skills, experience and substantial reasons for leaving previous employments will be discussed in more detail. If applicant has returned a completed “self-declaration form”, this will be considered by the interview panel and any relevant questions asked at this stage. This form will be destroyed for any unsuccessful shortlisted candidates immediately after the interview stage.

The interview structure will include:

- finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role, and,
- probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and asking about the reasons for this.

The interview will also be used to explore potential areas of concern and to determine the applicants suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing include:

- implications that adults and children are equal
- lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children
- inappropriate idealisation of children
- inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children, and,
- implications of negative safeguarding behaviours.

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

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract.
- all pre-employment checks have been completed (see section 3 below) including the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

If the above conditions are satisfied and the offer is accepted then the applicant will be issued with a contract of employment as confirmation of employment.

All new staff appointments are subject to a six months probationary period during which the notice period to terminate the employment for whatever reason, by either the employee or the school is four weeks. The school also reserves the right to extend this probationary period should it deem this necessary.

## 3. Pre-employment checks

In accordance with the recommendations of the DfE in "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025" the school carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees. All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the **mandatory pre-employment checks**.

Venture Learning will:



- verify a candidate's identity
- obtain an enhanced DBS check, including children's barred list information
- obtain, where appropriate a section 128 check for management roles
- obtain a separate children's barred list check if the applicant will start work on regulated activity with children before the DBS certificate is available
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- verify the person's right to work in the UK
- make any further check appropriate if the applicant has lived or worked outside the UK
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate
- ensure that an applicant to be employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the secretary of state.

### 3.1 Verification of identity and address

All offer applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to provide the following evidence of identity, address and qualifications:

- valid passport & current driving licence or full birth certificate;
- a utility bill or bank statement (issued within the last 3 months), or council tax or mortgage statement (issued within the last 12 months) showing their name and home address;
- documentation confirming their National Insurance Number (P45, P60 or National Insurance Card);
- documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications referred to in their application form.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other mechanism (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

### 3.2 References

References will be taken up on short listed candidates prior to interview unless otherwise stated on the application form.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two satisfactory references, one of which must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second referee should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. If the current or last employer was a school, this reference should be confirmed or completed by the Headteacher at that school. Neither referee should be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend. All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children.

All referees will be sent a copy of the job description and/or person specification for the role which the applicant has applied for. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:



- the applicant's dates of employment, salary, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record
- whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired)
- whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people
- the candidate's suitability for working with children and young people;
- the candidate's suitability for this post.

The school will only accept references obtained directly from the referee on the official form with all sections completed. It will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or on open references or testimonials. Checks are made to ensure that references are received from a genuine source.

Venture Learning will compare all references with any information given on the application form. Any discrepancies or inconsistencies in the information will be taken up with the applicant before any appointment is confirmed.

### 3.3 EU Settled Status check

This check will be carried out on EU nationals if applicable. The candidate will provide us with documentation which gives the school access to their status (similar to an update service check).

### 3.4 Teaching Prohibition/sanctions check – required for all staff

Teacher prohibition/sanctions orders prevent a person from carrying out teaching work in schools, sixth form colleges, and 16 to 19 academies in England. The school will carry out a prohibition check on all staff prior to appointment. The check of prohibition/sanctions will be carried out using The Teaching Regulation Agency portal; teachers & others prohibited from the profession & GTCE sanctions.

### 3.5 Section 128 barring direction

Such a direction prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of any independent school (including academies and free schools) and, under the terms of the direction, from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor in a maintained school. Management in these circumstances includes a management position as an employee; a trustee of an academy or free school trust; a governor or member of a proprietor body for an independent school; or a governor or any governing body in an independent school, academy or free school that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities.

The school will carry out a section 128 barring direction check for all governor, management/head of department positions, using The Teaching Regulation Agency – Section 128 barring direction online portal.

### 3.6 Overseas check



For employees who have lived or worked abroad for 3 months or more in the last 10 years, an overseas check is required. The school will expect the candidate to provide evidence in the form of a good conduct certificate from the country/countries they resided in.

Where available, the school will carry out criminal records checks for applicants who have lived/worked overseas and/or may obtain a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked.

Where the above is not possible, and/or where appropriate, we may also obtain a reference from the education organisation that Teachers worked for in the country they resided in. This would take place, regardless, if that was the last employer but this could also take place if they were a less recent employer, for example, where necessary, obtaining an overseas reference as the second reference.

#### **4. INDUCTION**

All staff who are new to the school will receive induction training that will include the Academy's safeguarding, code of conduct policies and guidance on safe working practices.

Regular meetings will be held during the first 6 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s).

#### **5. DISCLOSURE & BARRING SERVICE**

##### **5.1 DBS**

Due to the nature of the work, the school applies for Disclosure and Barring certificates from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in respect of all prospective staff members, governors and volunteers.

Venture Learning will always request an Enhanced Disclosure as described below, no more than 3 months before the employment start date.

Standard and Enhanced DBS certificates will include details of convictions and cautions (excluding youth cautions, reprimands and warnings) recorded on the PNC. PNC records relating to protected cautions and convictions will not automatically appear on the certificate. The rules regarding the automatic disclosure of convictions or cautions are set out in legislation. This states that a certificate must include the following:

Disposal Age when given/sentenced How long ago

Cautions for specified offence 18 or over Any time

Cautions for non-specified offence 18 or over Less than 6 years

Conviction for specified offence Any age Any time

Conviction resulting in custodial sentence Any age Any time

Conviction for non-specified offence 18 or over Less than 11 years

Conviction for non-specified offence Under 18 Less than 5.5 years



A 'specified offence' is one which is on the list of specified offences agreed by Parliament which will always be disclosed on a Standard or Enhanced DBS certificate, regardless of how long ago it was given.

This includes where a specified offence receives a caution (but not youth cautions, reprimands or warnings). The list includes a range of offences which are serious, relate to sexual or violent offending or are relevant in the context of safeguarding. The specified offences list covers those committed in England and Wales, however, the legislation also covers equivalent offences committed in other jurisdictions including overseas when they are recorded on the PNC. It is not possible to capture a definitive list of all equivalent offences under the law of all other jurisdictions.

Where an individual is aware that they have committed an offence outside England and Wales which may be equivalent to an offence on the list they should seek independent expert or legal advice to ensure that they provide information that is truthful and accurate.

In addition to records from the PNC, Enhanced certificates may also include information taken from police records that a chief officer of a police force considers relevant to the application and ought to be disclosed, or details of whether an individual is included on one or both of our two lists barring people from working with children and/or other vulnerable groups. The disclosure of information taken from police records is subject to statutory guidance to which the police must have regard. In considering this guidance, the police may, in principle, disclose information about offences that have been subject to filtering if they believe the information is relevant to the workforce or position applied for and ought to be disclosed.

- If the individual is applying for a position working with children or young adults, it will also reveal whether he/she is barred from working with children or vulnerable adults by virtue of their inclusion on the lists of those considered unsuitable to work with children or vulnerable adults maintained by the DfE and the Department of Health. 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).

When the school use staff from supply agencies, contractors etc then Venture Learning expects those agencies to have registered these staff with the DBS following their own policy or their own comparable policy. Proof of registration will be required before the school will commission services from any such organisation.

## 5.2 Retention and security of disclosure information

The school's policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the use of disclosure information.

In particular, the school will:

- store disclosure information and other confidential documents issued by the DBS in locked, non-portable storage containers, access to which will be restricted to members of the school's senior management team or relevant staff.
- not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary. In most cases, the school will not retain such information for longer than 6 months although the school will keep a record of the date of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure, the position in question, the unique number issued by the DBS and the recruitment decision taken.



- ensure that any disclosure information is destroyed by suitably secure means such as shredding
- prohibit the photocopying or scanning of any disclosure information.

The school will comply with the provisions of the DBS code of practice, a copy of which is available on request.

## **6. Retention of records**

If an applicant is appointed, the school will retain any relevant information provided on their application form (together with any attachments) on their personnel file. If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will normally be confidentially destroyed after six months unless the applicant specifically requests the school to keep their details on file.

## **8. Queries**

If an applicant has any queries on how to complete the application form or any other matter they should contact the school directly.

