



SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

2026-2027

Group Policy Document

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. POLICY STATEMENT
3. PURPOSE
4. SCOPE
5. PRINCIPLES OF SAFER RECRUITMENT
6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
7. SAFER RECRUITMENT TRAINING
8. PRE-RECRUITMENT PROCESS
 - 8.1 JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION
 - 8.2 APPLICATION FORM
 - 8.3 CRIMINAL SELF-DISCLOSURE
 - 8.4 REFERENCES
9. SHORTLISTING
10. INTERVIEW PROCESS
 - 10.1 INTERVIEW PANEL
 - 10.2 SCOPE OF INTERVIEW
 - 10.3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
11. CONDITIONAL OFFER OF APPOINTMENT
12. PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKS
 - 12.1 IDENTITY VERIFICATION
 - 12.2 RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK
 - 12.3 DBS ENHANCED DISCLOSURE
 - 12.4 BARRED LIST CHECK
 - 12.5 PROHIBITION FROM TEACHING WORK CHECK
 - 12.6 QUALIFIED TEACHER STATUS CHECK
 - 12.7 OVERSEAS CHECKS
 - 12.8 HEALTH AND FITNESS
 - 12.9 QUALIFICATIONS VERIFICATION
 - 12.10 REFERENCES
 - 12.11 CHILDCARE DISQUALIFICATION REGULATIONS
 - 12.12 STATUTORY INDUCTION
13. SINGLE CENTRAL RECORD
14. COMMENCING WORK BEFORE CHECKS COMPLETE
15. POST-APPOINTMENT INDUCTION
16. SUPPLY STAFF AND AGENCY WORKERS
17. VOLUNTEERS
18. CONTRACTORS AND VISITING PROFESSIONALS
19. RECORD RETENTION
20. MONITORING AND REVIEW
21. DEFINITIONS
22. CONTACT DETAILS

1. Introduction

ARK Inclusive Education LTD is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, and contractors to share in this commitment.

This Safer Recruitment Policy has been produced in line with the DfE guidance '**Keeping Children Safe in Education**' (2024) and the statutory guidance '**Working Together to Safeguard Children**' (2023) . This policy aims to ensure that safe and fair recruitment and selection is conducted at all times. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral factor in recruitment and selection and is an essential part of creating safe environments for children and young people.

As an alternative provision provider, ARK Inclusive Education LTD recognises its responsibility to ensure that all individuals working with our pupils are suitable to do so. We operate across multiple hired premises, including village halls, private gym spaces, and office spaces, and we ensure that our safer recruitment practices apply consistently across all settings.

2. Policy Statement

ARK Inclusive Education LTD is committed to:

- Attracting, selecting, and retaining employees who will successfully and positively contribute to providing a valuable service
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children and young people
- Creating a motivated and committed workforce with appropriate knowledge, skills, experience, and ability to do the job
- Delivering a high-quality service that safeguards and promotes the welfare of pupils
- Ensuring that safeguarding is embedded in every stage of the recruitment process

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the recruitment of all staff is conducted in a fair, effective, and economic manner
- Ensure that the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people takes place at each stage of the process
- Ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the appointment of all staff
- Ensure all relevant equal opportunities legislation is adhered to
- Ensure the most cost-effective use is made of resources in the recruitment and selection process
- Comply with all statutory guidance and legal requirements for safer recruitment in education settings

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees of ARK Inclusive Education LTD (full-time, part-time, and fixed-term)
- All volunteers
- All contractors and agency staff
- All individuals involved in the recruitment and selection process
- All individuals working with children in any capacity on behalf of ARK

The ultimate responsibility for recruitment and selection lies with the Director. The Director has delegated responsibility for recruitment to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other appropriate personnel.

5. Principles of Safer Recruitment

The following principles are encompassed in this policy:

Principle	Details
Fair Treatment	All applicants will receive fair treatment throughout the recruitment process
Job Description	All applicant packs will include a job description detailing the post holder's responsibilities for safeguarding
Merit-Based Recruitment	Employees will be recruited on the knowledge, experience, and skills needed for the job
Selection Panel	Selection will be carried out by a panel with at least two members. At least one panel member will have received appropriate Safer Recruitment Training
Assessment Methods	Selection will be based on a minimum of completed application form, shortlisting, and interview, but wherever possible, involve other assessments
Advertising	Posts will be advertised with reference to ARK's commitment to safeguarding and promoting welfare of children and young people

Principle

Details

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act makes it a requirement to make reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process if an applicant makes the employer aware that they have a disability

Vetting

All successful applicants will be subject to appropriate pre-employment vetting checks before commencing work

6. Equal Opportunities

ARK Inclusive Education LTD is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of recruitment and selection are fair. Recruitment and selection procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of:

- Race
- Nationality
- Gender
- Religion or belief
- Age
- Disability
- Marital or civil partnership status
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

Reasonable adjustments will be made to the recruitment process for applicants with disabilities.

7. Safer Recruitment Training

It is a requirement that at least one member of the interview panel has completed LSCP-approved Safer Recruitment Training prior to the start of the recruitment process.

All panel members will have received appropriate training in:

- Safer recruitment practices
- Safeguarding and child protection
- Equal opportunities and diversity
- Interviewing skills
- The legal framework for recruitment
- Implicit bias awareness

The Director and DSL will ensure that their Safer Recruitment Training is maintained and updated every two years as recommended.

8. Pre-Recruitment Process

8.1 Job Description and Person Specification

A job description and person specification will be issued for all posts. In the case of volunteers, this will include a volunteer role profile.

Job Description will include:

- Job title and reporting line
- Purpose of the role
- Key responsibilities and duties
- Clear reference to safeguarding responsibilities
- Working hours and location
- Reporting relationships
- Salary and benefits
- Requirement for DBS Enhanced Disclosure

Person Specification will include:

- Qualifications and training required
- Experience required
- Knowledge and skills
- Personal attributes
- Essential criteria (must have)
- Desirable criteria (nice to have)
- Safeguarding competency requirements
- SEND knowledge and experience requirements

8.2 Application Form

A standard application form will be used to obtain a common set of data from all applicants. The application form will be adapted for different posts but will always include key information on safeguarding.

As such, candidates must provide:

- Full employment history
- Adequate explanation for any gaps in employment
- A signed and dated declaration
- Appropriate disclosure of relevant criminal convictions
- Confirmation of right to work in the UK
- Referee details

The application form will include a statement making it clear that providing false information will result in disqualification or dismissal.

8.3 Criminal Self-Disclosure

All shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-disclosure form with their invitation to interview.

Criminal Self-Disclosure will require:

- Declaration of all unspent convictions
- Declaration of spent convictions (where applicable)
- Declaration of cautions, warnings, and reprimands
- Declaration of Barred List status
- Declaration of any disqualification orders
- Consent for DBS check
- Signature and date

8.4 References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

Reference Process:

- References will be sought on all shortlisted candidates
- References will be obtained, where possible, before interview
- References will always be requested directly from the referee using the standardised ARK reference form
- References will be checked against the information provided on the application form
- Any discrepancies will be noted and explored with the candidate and/or referee
- ARK will take reasonable steps to verify references received electronically
- Where references are received by email, the authenticity will be verified
- If a reference is not from a professional email address, follow-up will be conducted to ensure authenticity

Referee Questions will include:

- Confirmation of employment dates and role
- Confirmation of any disciplinary sanctions or misconduct
- Confirmation of suitability to work with children
- Confirmation of any safeguarding concerns
- Confirmation of candidate's character and work ethic

9. Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be carried out by at least two panel members against the agreed person specification criteria.

Shortlisting Process:

- All applications will be scrutinised against the person specification
- Any discrepancies, anomalies, or gaps in employment history will be noted
- Candidates with gaps in employment will be asked to provide an explanation
- A shortlist of candidates to interview will be agreed
- Unsuccessful candidates will be notified
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview with the self-disclosure form

10. Interview Process

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate for the post, including at least one question exploring their suitability to work with children and young people. The selection process for people who will work with children and young people will always include a face-to-face interview, even if there is only one candidate.

10.1 Interview Panel

Requirement	Details
Panel Size	A minimum of two interviewers will form the interviewing panel
Authority	Members of the panel will have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointments
Training	At least one member of the interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training
Pre-Interview Meeting	Panel members will meet before the interviews to reach a consensus about the required standard and consider issues to be explored
Conflict of Interest	Where a candidate is known personally to a member of the selection panel, this will be declared before shortlisting takes place. It may then be necessary to consider changing the selection panel

10.2 Scope of Interview

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also explore:

- The candidate's attitude toward children and young people
- The candidate's ability to support ARK's ethos for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Any gaps in the candidate's employment history
- Any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee
- The candidate's understanding of SEND needs and alternative provision
- The candidate's approach to behaviour management and de-escalation
- The candidate's commitment to equality and diversity
- The candidate's understanding of confidentiality and data protection

10.3 Interview Questions

Safeguarding Questions will include:

- "What would you do if a child disclosed a safeguarding concern to you?"
- "How would you handle a situation where you had concerns about a colleague's behaviour?"
- "What is your understanding of safer working practices?"
- "Describe a time when you had to manage a challenging behaviour situation. What did you do?"

SEND Questions will include:

- "What experience do you have working with children with SEMH needs?"
- "How would you adapt your approach for a child with autism?"
- "What strategies do you use to support children with communication difficulties?"
- "How do you build positive relationships with children who have experienced trauma?"

11. Conditional Offer of Appointment

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon satisfactory completion of all pre-appointment checks. The offer will be made in writing and will clearly state the conditional nature of the offer.

The conditional offer letter will:

- Confirm the role, salary, and start date
- List all required pre-appointment checks
- State that the offer is conditional on satisfactory completion of these checks
- Include a timeframe for completion of checks
- Request the candidate to complete and return a medical questionnaire
- Request the candidate to provide original documents for verification

12. Pre-Appointment Checks

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon the following checks:

12.1 Identity Verification

- Verification of the candidate's identity using photographic identification
- Verification of identity using additional documents from the DBS identity checking guidelines
- Original documents must be seen in person by a panel member

12.2 Right to Work in the UK

- Verification of eligibility to work in the UK
- Use of Home Office Employer Checking Service where required
- Retention of a copy of the candidate's right to work documents

12.3 DBS Enhanced Disclosure

- A satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure will be obtained
- The certificate must be seen and verified by ARK
- The certificate will be checked for any information that may affect suitability
- The certificate will be verified against the applicant's identity documents
- A copy of the certificate will be retained on the personnel file

12.4 Barred List Check

- A check of the DfE Barred List will be completed
- This check will confirm the applicant is not barred from working with children
- This check will be completed before the applicant commences work

12.5 Prohibition from Teaching Work Check

- A check using the Employer Access Online Service will be conducted
- This will confirm if a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State for Education exists
- This applies to posts carrying out 'teaching work'

12.6 Qualified Teacher Status Check

- Verification of QTS status (for teaching posts)
- Verification of the successful completion of statutory induction
- This applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999 (unless employed as NQTs)

12.7 Overseas Checks

- Appropriate overseas checks will be conducted for candidates who have lived or worked abroad in the last 5 years
- For those carrying out teaching work in the EEA area, an EEA prohibition order check will be completed
- References will be sought from any overseas education employer in the same period

12.8 Health and Fitness

- Verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their role
- A pre-employment medical questionnaire will be completed
- Reasonable adjustments will be considered for any disabilities

12.9 Qualifications Verification

- Verification of qualifications as stated on the application form
- Original certificates to be seen by a panel member

12.10 References

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory and verified references
- References will be checked against the information on the application form
- Any discrepancies or issues will be followed up

12.11 Childcare Disqualification Regulations

- Check under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009
- This applies to any staff who work in childcare provision as defined in statutory guidance

12.12 Statutory Induction

- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction period
- Applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999 and are not employed as NQTs

13. Single Central Record

ARK Inclusive Education LTD will maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) as required by Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The following personnel will be recorded on the SCR:

- All employees (full-time, part-time, fixed-term)
- All volunteers
- All supply staff and agency workers
- All contractors and visiting professionals in regular contact with children
- All governors and trustees

The SCR will record:

- Identity verification
- Right to work in the UK verification
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure details and date
- Barred List check status and date
- Prohibition from Teaching Work check status and date
- QTS verification (where applicable)
- Overseas checks (where applicable)
- References obtained and scrutinised
- Health and fitness verification
- Induction completion
- Date checks were completed
- Name of person who carried out the checks

All leavers will be deleted off the Single Central Record immediately.

14. Commencing Work Before Checks Complete

If an individual's DBS certificate is not completed, a member of staff would only be able to commence work if ARK is satisfied that:

- Appropriate supervision is in place
- Other checks (references etc.) have been completed satisfactorily
- The DBS Barred List check has been completed
- The individual is not undertaking unsupervised regulated activity

The DSL will conduct a risk assessment before allowing a member of staff to commence work before all checks are complete.

15. Post-Appointment Induction

There will be an induction programme for all staff which includes:

Induction Area	Details
Safeguarding	Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1 and Annex A)
Child Protection	ARK's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Online Safety	Online safety policy and acceptable use policy
Behaviour	Behaviour policy and positive handling procedures
Whistleblowing	Whistleblowing procedures
Health & Safety	Health and safety policies and procedures

Induction Area	Details
Data Protection	GDPR and data protection requirements
SEND	Understanding SEND needs and EHCP processes
Referral Pathway	Understanding the referral and review process
Safer Working Practice	Safer Working Practice Guidance
Induction will be completed before the employee starts work with children or within their first week of employment.	

16. Supply Staff and Agency Workers

When ARK needs to use the services of a supply agency, we will ensure the agency operates a safer recruitment process and provides confirmation that the following have been checked and judged as satisfactory:

- Identity
- Enhanced DBS Disclosure
- Right to work in the UK
- The DBS Barred List
- Any Prohibition Order, Interim Prohibition Order, or GTCE sanction for those undertaking teaching work
- Qualifications (where applicable)
- Overseas Checks, including EEA check where applicable

When a supply member of staff arrives at ARK, their identity will be checked and it will be confirmed that they are the same person on the documentation from the agency. The supply staff's details will be entered on the Single Central Record (SCR).

17. Volunteers

All volunteers will be subject to the following checks:

- Application form completed
- Identity verification
- References (where appropriate)
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure (where applicable)
- Written risk assessment in relation to the undertaking of an Enhanced DBS Disclosure
- Safeguarding training

Volunteers will not be left unsupervised with children until all checks are complete and a risk assessment has been conducted.



18. Contractors and Visiting Professionals

All contractors and visiting professionals who have regular contact with children will be subject to:

- Identity verification
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure (where applicable)
- Barred List check (where applicable)
- Confirmation that their employer operates a safer recruitment process

19. Record Retention

All recruitment and selection records will be retained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Records will be retained for:

- Successful candidates: 6 years from the date of appointment
- Unsuccessful candidates: 6 months from the date of interview

20. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated in line with:

- Changes to DfE guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education)
- Changes to legislation
- Changes to safeguarding practice
- Learning from safeguarding audits and reviews
- Changes to ARK's operational model

The Director is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and ensuring that all staff are aware of their responsibilities.

21. Definitions

Term	Definition
Teaching Work	Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils; delivering lessons to pupils; assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils. "Delivering" includes delivering lessons through distance learning or computer-aided techniques.
Regulated Activity	Activity involving children where the individual has direct, unsupervised contact and the activity is undertaken frequently, intensively, or overnight.
Single Central Record (SCR)	A record maintained by the school/AP provider of all checks carried out on staff, volunteers, and other individuals in regular contact with children.

Term	Definition
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead - the person responsible for safeguarding at ARK Inclusive Education LTD.
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer - the person responsible for managing allegations against professionals.
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service - the government body that provides criminal records checks.
Barred List	The DfE list of individuals barred from working with children.

22. Contact Details

ARK Inclusive Education LTD

- **Email:** enquiries@arkinclusive.co.uk
- **Phone:** 07825 150401
- **Website:** ww.arkinclusive.co.uk

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) : Darren Singh

Deputy DSL: [Vacancy]

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) : LADO@doncaster.gov.uk.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) : www.gov.uk/dbs

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