



FIRST STEPS TOGETHER
SKILLS FOR LIFE

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Last Update: October 2024

Next Update: October 2025

Safer Recruitment Policy

First Steps Together (FST) is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. FST recognises that the effectiveness and safety of its recruitment policy and procedures make a major contribution to child protection by helping to deter, reject or identify people who might be unsuitable for working with children.

With regard to the schools we make for safeguarding and safer recruitment, FST takes into account the nature, age range and other significant features of the schools including EYFS pupils.

The Recruitment Policy and Procedures are based on and conform with statutory and non-statutory guidance contained in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)'. This policy also has due regard for Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (July 2015) supplemented by the non- statutory advice and a briefing note The Prevent duty: Departmental Advice for Schools and Childminders and The Use of social media for On-line Radicalisation (July 2015)) and the Disqualification under Childcare Act 2006 (August 2018).

First Steps Together aims to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly by reason of a protected characteristic as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

This policy applies to all the FST centres, including the Ladybirds Hub (Early Years Foundation Stage).

Throughout the selection and recruitment procedure, FST will have regard for the guidance as set out in the aforementioned documents as well as the current ISI regulations. FST are committed to ensuring that no one will be appointed unless they have a clear understanding of the specific issues regarding safeguarding that apply generally as well as EYFS children.

This will involve:

- Requesting applicants to complete an application form, requesting identifying details, National Insurance number, a full, chronological career history since leaving secondary education, any relevant or required qualifications, a declaration of existing contacts in the school and details of referees;

- Providing a Job Description and Person Specification that contains the school's Child Protection policy statement.
- Providing each applicant with a copy of a document detailing the application and recruitment process at FST, which also contains the school's Child Protection policy statement.
- Ensuring all recruitment documents also clearly state that "applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service".
- Asking candidates appropriate questions at interviews relating both to their skills and their reasons for wanting to work with children.

Staff

First Steps Together follows the ISI's definition of "staff", which is set out as follows:

"Any person working at the school whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract, but does not include supply staff or a volunteer"

(ISI Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements)

Application

All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form asking for the following:

- Full, identifying details of the applicant, including current and former names, current address and National Insurance Number.
- A full, chronological career history since leaving secondary education. The applicant will be asked to clarify any gaps.
- Any academic and/or vocational qualifications that are relevant to the position for which he/she is applying.
- A declaration of any existing contacts in the school.
- Details of referees.

Candidates will be asked to complete any incomplete forms. A Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed application form.

Along with the application form, applicants will receive an application pack containing the following:

- A job description,
- A person specification,
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post,
- A School Prospectus
- The school's Child Protection Policy statement,
- An introduction to the school, and
- An explanation of the application and recruitment process at FST

Interview

Long-listed applicants may be invited to a brief, informal, initial interview to enable a more accurate short-listing process.

Short-listed applicants will be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail. Further assessment may be introduced, such as skills tests, or an observed lesson, dependent upon the role.

A personal safeguarding interview will also take place, to better understand the candidate's attitudes, motivations and suitability to work with children.

Written records of all interviews, observations and skills tests will be kept on the successful applicant's personnel file.

References will usually be obtained prior to interview, unless the candidate has indicated that they do not wish for these to be taken up prior to offer stage (for example in the case of a current employer who is not aware of their wish to leave their employment).

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of the checks listed under the following section, 'Appointment Procedures for Staff'.

Appointment Procedure for Staff

FST follows the recommendations set out in the Independent Schools Standards Regulations with regard to the recruitment of staff by undertaking the following checks prior to the first day at work:

Career History

- Candidates are asked for a full, chronological career history since leaving secondary school. They will be asked to provide reasons for any gaps in the career history section of the application form.

References

- The school will request at least two references for each candidate, which will usually be a combination of the candidate's current or most recent employer and their most recent instance of working with children. These should cover roughly five years in a person's career history where possible.
- Referees will be asked to state the following in the school's reference Form:
 - Any disciplinary or child protection issues
 - Any reasons why the candidate should not be employed for work with children
 - The candidate's reasons for leaving
- Referees will also be asked to write a general reference as part of the reference form, in order to provide a better picture of the candidate
- If a reference is taken over the telephone, detailed notes will be taken, dated and signed.
- The school will not accept references from relatives or referees writing solely in the capacity of friends.
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ID Check

This is carried out in line with DBS requirements. Candidates will be asked to provide the following:

- Passport

- Driving licence (photocard) and/or birth certificate
- Proof of address as per DBS guidelines
- Any evidence of a change of name

If the candidate cannot provide any of the above, guidance issued from the DBS will be followed.

Copies will be taken and kept on the candidate's file.

Right to Work in the UK

This will usually be the candidate's UK passport. However, the school will follow Government-issued guidance in cases where a candidate is unable to provide a UK passport.

A copy of the evidence will be taken and kept on the candidate's file.

DBS Check

It is anticipated that all regular positions will fall within the definition of 'Regulated Activity', (with the exception of certain volunteer roles) and will therefore require an Enhanced DBS check.

Where a post is eligible, a check against the barred list will be undertaken, either within the enhanced DBS disclosure or separately. Until the school has had sight of the original Disclosure Certificate, the candidate will be treated as unchecked.

The Disclosure may be obtained either by asking the individual to apply for a new DBS Certificate, or by them producing a DBS Certificate which has been registered on the DBS Update Service (only applicable to DBS Certificates which have been issued since 17 June 2013). Candidates who have registered with the DBS Update Service must produce the original of their DBS Certificate, along with the required proof of ID. In accordance with DBS guidance, the school will ask the candidate to sign a statement to say that they give FST permission to access their record on the DBS Update Service. A printout of the result will be produced and held on the candidate's file.

If the DBS is delayed, SLT may allow the member of staff to start work, on the following conditions:

- A self declaration is complete
- The appointment is not confirmed
- All other relevant checks have been completed satisfactorily
- The DBS application has been made in advance
- A Risk Assessment is written and kept on file
- A separate Barred List check is made
- The Risk Assessment is reviewed every two weeks until the Disclosure Certificate arrives
- Appropriate safeguards are taken (e.g. supervision)
- The member of staff is informed as to what these safeguards are

Prohibited Teacher Check

Prior to beginning work at the school, FST will undertake a Prohibited Teacher Check using the DfE Teaching Regulation Agency website.

Prohibition from Management of Independent Schools Check (“section 128 direction”)

The school will check whether staff appointed to certain management positions are subject to a section 128

direction. The posts which would fall under this definition are:

- Headteacher
- Senior Leadership Team staff (including non-teaching staff)
- Positions with Head of Department or Head of Year status
- Governors

Disqualification from Childcare Declaration

Under Section 75 of the Childcare Act, 2006 individuals are disqualified from childcare school if they have committed certain specified offences. This applies to any member of staff employed in early years childcare (up to the age of 5) or later years childcare (up to the age

of 8) in nursery, primary or secondary school settings or the management of such settings. The school will ask members of staff to complete a Disqualification from Childcare Self-Declaration Form, both prior to the start of employment and on an annual basis thereafter. This will apply to those members of staff who work in or manage the EYFS school, but it is likely that most staff and contractors will be asked to complete the Declaration for the sake of good practice.

Overseas Candidates

If a candidate has lived overseas for more than three months at any point in the past ten years, the candidate will be asked to present an overseas Police Check/Certificate of Good Conduct from the relevant country. Where this is not possible, further checks may be carried out, for instance extra references may be obtained-and cost for translation to be paid for by the applicant.

Where the candidate has worked in a school or setting in the UK since moving from overseas, without going back overseas, the school will not repeat the overseas check, in line with the ISIM Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements.

Medical Fitness Declaration

Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration confirming that they know of no reasons, on grounds of mental or physical health, why they should not be able to discharge the responsibilities required by the post in question.

Qualifications Check

All candidates will be asked to provide original proof of any professional qualifications they hold which are either required for, or relevant to, the position. Copies will be taken and kept on file. If no original is to be found, the school will ask the candidate to order replacement certificates or will request confirmation of the qualification in writing from the organisation or institution concerned. The confirmation will be kept on file.

Outcomes of the Application and Recruitment Process

Where the following apply, the school will report the facts to the Police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service:

- The candidate is found to be on the Barred List, or the DBS Disclosure shows s/he has been disqualified from working with children by a Court; or
- The candidate is found to have been prohibited from the teaching profession
- A candidate has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application; or
- There are serious concerns about a candidate's suitability to work with children

Induction

All new staff will take part in an induction programme designed to help familiarise them with the school's policies and procedures, including confirming that they have read, understood, and agree to the following:

FST Safeguarding Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy – COVID-19 Annex
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Cyber-bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Sanctions – Supplementary Guidance
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Physical Restraint and Use of Reasonable Force
- Searching and Confiscation Policy
- Dealing with Pastoral Incidents
- Use of Mobile Phones Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy

- Visiting Speaker Policy
- Government Documents
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part one and Annex A)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)

The programme also includes attendance at Child Protection training appropriate to the role.

Appointment and Safeguarding Procedures for Others

Supply Staff

First Steps Together conducts the same recruitment checks for supply teaching staff as those for fully employed staff.

Self Employed Professionals (such as Sports Coaches, Therapists)

If the individual is self-employed, the same checks will apply as those for staff.

If the individual is employed by a company, the following will apply:

Staff from Other Organisations

The school will ensure that their contract with any company, which provides staff who will have access to areas where unsupervised contact with children is possible, provides for the required checks on staff to be completed by the company itself. Please see "Procedure for Engaging Agency or Contract Staff".

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body, supervising the school's pupils either on or off the site, the school will seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place for safeguarding children and child protection and there are arrangements to liaise with the school on these matters where appropriate.

Visiting Speakers

In line with Prevent statutory guidance, the school will ensure that any visiting speakers who might fall within the scope of the Prevent duty, whether invited by staff or pupils, are appropriately supervised. The school will, in line with regulation, also take action to ensure that each speaker is suitable.

Volunteers

New regular volunteers will be subject to the following checks, in line with current ISI guidance:

- Production of photo ID on arrival
- If the post is not classed as in Regulated Activity, a risk assessment will be carried out and kept on file; other checks may be carried out if deemed necessary
- An informal meeting and a Safeguarding introduction will be arranged where required
- Confirmation that no concerns have been raised by others in the school community

Regulated Activity

No DBS or Barred List checks will be carried out for those who are short term volunteers for events or trips. However, proof of ID will be checked, and the volunteer will be supervised at all times.

Vetting Check Exemptions

In line with the DfE Regulatory Requirements, the school will not conduct vetting checks on the following:

- Visitors to the Head/other staff
- Those who have only brief contact with children in the presence of a member of FST staff
- Pupils aged under 16 on work experience or similar
- Those on the school site when pupils are not present
- Visitors carrying out repairs or servicing equipment

The school does not re-check staff returning from maternity leave, sabbaticals or similar.

The Single Central Register of Appointments

In accordance with current legislation, the school keeps a Single Central Register, indicating whether or not the following checks have been completed on all current members of staff (where appropriate) at the school:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the position
- Enhanced Disclosure (or DBS Status Check)
- Barred List check
- Right to work in the UK
- Overseas checks, where applicable
- Prohibition from Teaching Check (where appropriate)
- Prohibition from management check (where appropriate)
- References
- Career History/CV Check
- Medical Declaration
- Disqualification from Childcare (where applicable)

A checklist is completed with regard to the recruitment checks outlined in this policy. The completed checklist is stored in each member of staff's personnel file.

The Recruitment Process Summary

Planning & Advertising

- Produce draft application pack to include documents detailed above.
- Produce draft advert, including statement re safeguarding and DBS
- Agree proposed salary band with the Bursar and research advertising methods and costs
- Authorisation from the Bursar must be obtained before the role is advertised

Response to Advert

- Keep details of all enquiries on spreadsheet
- Send an application pack to each enquirer consisting of:
 - Application Pack
 - Application Form
 - Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form Applications
- Number each application in the order in which they arrive
- Keep original in HR Office and give copies to the interviewer

References

- If candidate and interviewer happy to proceed with references, request references
- **Interviews**
- Once shortlisting has been completed, invite shortlisted candidates for interview
- Interviews will consist of skills related questions and exploring candidates' professional backgrounds.
- The interview will include questions covering safeguarding.
- A lesson observation will normally be carried out for teaching positions and possibly a skills test for non-teaching positions, depending on the role
- The interview panel should consist of more than one person.

Recruitment Decision and Checks

- The interviewer contacts the successful candidate directly to informally offer them the position
- The HR manager will send a Letter of Appointment and Contract to the candidate offering the role, subject to successful completion of all pre-recruitment checks, all outstanding checks to be detailed in the Appendix to the letter of appointment

- Letters to unsuccessful candidates should then be sent, including to those who have been on 'hold'

Recruitment Checks

The pre-recruitment checks required for staff are all listed on the Regulatory Recruitment Checklist.

FST Paperwork

Ensure that the candidate has completed all FST paperwork listed on the Regulatory Recruitment Checklist, including confirmation that all relevant policies and documents have been read.

Child Protection Training

Arrange for the necessary Child Protection training to be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Data Protection

The school will ensure the security of all employees' personal data at all times, whether prospective, current or ex-employees. Personal data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. Data will be retained and disposed of in line with the school's data retention policies.