

# Oak Bank School Policy

## Safeguarding & Safer Recruitment



Prepared by Approved by	Review Period	GB / Committee	Date Approved	Date of Next Review
RF/PC	1 Year	SLT	November 2018	November 2018

Oak Bank School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and contractors to share this commitment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with “Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education” (DfE 2010).

Oak Bank School will ensure that:

- The welfare of the child remains paramount
- All our students, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity have the right to be protected from harm.
- All staff (paid or unpaid) have a duty to keep students safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm
- All staff has a duty to report without delay any concerns about a person’s safety to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Head of School, in their absence. Staff also have a duty to take care of themselves.(Health and Safety At Work Act 1974)

## **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people in our community**

### **Confidentiality**

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will disclose any information about a student to other members of staff on a need to know basis
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard young people
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise child confidentiality for any disclosure that may be made.

### **Supporting Children**

We recognise that for some of our students the School may be the only safe, secure and predictable element in their lives. When at the School their behaviour may be challenging. The School will endeavour to support the student through:

- The content of the curriculum
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of being valued
- Personalised learning provision
- Liaison with other agencies that support the student such as Children’s Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Access and Inclusion and the Educational Psychology Service and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- Notifying Children’s Social Care immediately if there is a significant concern

- Providing continuing support to a student about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the student's new school

### **Child Protection Policy and Procedures**

All staff should alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions.

The term abuse is intended to include any situation where there is grave concern regarding the well being of a student, including neglect as well as physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

### **Academy's Responsibility**

It is part of the School's responsibility of care to be alert to signs of abuse. These may include:

- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Withdrawal from social relationships
- Sudden change in attendance patterns and other causes of concern about attendance
- Change in working patterns
- Loss of concentration, lack of homework
- Lack of motivation
- Tearfulness
- Listlessness
- Physical bruising

### **Procedures**

Staff should be receptive to any attempt a student may make to report that s/he, or another student is being or has been abused. During and following a disclosure staff should:

- Be observant
- React calmly
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell and that they are not to blame
- Take what the child says seriously
- Be careful not to lead the child
- Remember not to promise confidentiality right from the beginning. You should advise the child that you will have to pass information on if there is any suggestion of harm to themselves or somebody else
- Inform the child what you will do next
- Make a full and written record of what has been said as soon as possible and do not delay in passing on the information
- The Designated Person Responsible for Child Protection will, if the student does not dispel suspicions, refer the student to the Child Protection Team. **It is not our responsibility to decide whether abuse has taken place or not, however it is our responsibility to pass on any concerns to the appropriate authority immediately.**

- Emergency action – in some cases staff may need to protect a child immediately. In these situations staff should dial 999. The police are the only agency with statutory powers for the immediate protection of children
- It is inadvisable to touch a student when they are disclosing sensitive information

### **Responsibilities**

- All suspicious observations of staff should be immediately reported to the Designated Person Responsible for Child Protection or the Principal
- If any incident occurs which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, then the relevant information should be recorded promptly and reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

### **Safer Recruitment**

The safe recruitment of staff is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children. Oak Bank School 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.

The school 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 which is systematic, efficient, effective and equal. In doing so, it upholds its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants on grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the practice of safe recruitment of staff appointed to Oak Bank School. 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 school will ensure that at least one member of the appointment panel has successfully completed Safer Recruitment Training. 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 the School by the inclusion of the following statement: "The Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, parents, volunteers, visitors and contractors to share this commitment". All post holders are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

### Stage 2: Pre -Application Pack

Prospective applicants are supplied with the following:

- Application Form;
- Job Description & Person Specification;
- School information pack
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

All applicants must complete the application form in full with no employment gaps.

### Stage 3 Applicant Short-Listing

Candidates for the post and suited to the job description and person specification following analysis of their applications will be short-listed following consultation between the Head of School and others involved in the interviews process. References are taken up before the short-listing stage. All appointments will be made subject to DBS clearance, medical checks and references.

### Stage 4 Interview

Candidates selected for interview will have to provide proof of identity, certificates of qualifications, eligibility to live and work in the UK. The interview process will seek to assess each candidate in terms of fulfilling the requirements of the post and significantly in terms of safer recruitment practices will explore attitudes towards working with children.

Candidates will always be required:

- To explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment;
- To explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the interviewers
- To declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS disclosure;
- To demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

References are sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate are never accepted instead of a signed reference from a referee. In cases of applicants being invited to interview, referees can be contacted by telephone or e-mail prior to receiving a written, signed reference.

#### Stage 5 Successful Candidate:

##### Pre-Employment Checks

Further to those checks at the point of interview the candidate will be required to provide all of the following prior to taking up the post being undertaken:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- Verification of the candidate's identity
- A satisfactory Enhanced DBS disclosure.
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of professional status where required e.g. GTC registration, QTS
- The production of evidence of the right to work in the UK

#### Stage 6 Induction

All newly appointed staff will, either prior to or at the point of taking up the post, undergo a programme of induction appropriate for their post. The induction will specifically address issues concerning the safeguarding of children and young people as well as matters directly related to the operation of the post.

##### **Central Record of Pre-Employment Checks**

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. This record contains details of checks:

- All staff who are employed to work at the school
- All staff who are employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly by the school or through an agency
- 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.

## **Rehabilitation of Offenders Disclosure**

All posts within Oak Bank School are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced DBS.

## **Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff**

It is essential that any allegations of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in an educational setting is dealt with quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection to the child, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. This section of the policy sets out how we would manage cases of allegations that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child/children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Principal, Deputy Principal or Designated Person for Child Protection.

## **Initial Considerations**

All allegations will be followed up and taken seriously. In rare cases allegations will be so serious as to require immediate intervention by children's social services or the police. All other allegations will be referred to the Senior Advisor for Safeguarding Children in Education at the Local Authority for an objective discussion and course of action. The allegation will not be investigated by the Principal at this stage. The discussion will consider whether there is evidence or information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded. If the allegation is deemed not to be false and there is reason to believe that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, the Local Authority Designated Officer will immediately refer to Children's Services and ask for a strategy discussion, in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children, to be convened.

If there is no cause to suspect that 'significant harm' is an issue but a criminal offence might have been committed, the Local Authority Designated Officer will immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed.

The Principal will inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible after consulting Local Authority Designated Officer. However, where a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or Children's Social Care may need to be involved, the Principal should not do that until those agencies have been consulted, and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the person.

## **Actions following initial consideration**

If it has been determined that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the Academy to deal with it. If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Principal will institute appropriate action within three working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days. If a further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action, the Principal will discuss who is most appropriate to carry this out. In any case a report should be produced within 10 working days.

On receipt of the report the Principal and Chair of Governors will consult the Local Authority Designated Officer, and decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed within two working days. If a hearing is needed it should be held within 15 working days.

Cases subject to police investigation should be reviewed no later than 4 weeks after the initial action meeting and dates for subsequent reviews set if necessary.

If the police and/or the CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution or the person is acquitted by a court, the police should pass on all of their information to the Academy and the same procedure will followed as was demonstrated above after the receipt of report.

## **Suspension**

Suspension should be considered in any case where is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or if the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

## **Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues. Staff with any such concerns should report them to their line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

## **Complaints or concerns expressed by Student, Parents, Staff or Volunteers**

We recognise that listening to children is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. To this end any expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard his/her welfare.

We will also seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes a complaint is informed not only about the action the school will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. The school will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint.

