



Safer Recruitment Policy

Updated September 2025

1. Purpose

Tree of Life is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect all staff, volunteers, governors, visitors, and contractors to share this commitment. This Safer Recruitment Policy follows statutory guidance, including **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**, and applies to all recruitment and selection activity.

2. Principles of Safer Recruitment

- Safeguarding of pupils is paramount.
- Robust recruitment procedures reduce the risk of inappropriate appointment.
- Recruitment decisions will be transparent, fair, lawful, and well-documented.

3. Advertising and Application

- All adverts state Tree of Life's safeguarding commitment and expectation that applicants are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- Application will be via a safer recruitment application form.
- Every applicant must provide a full employment history, with reasons for leaving each post.

4. Shortlisting and Online Checks (KCSIE 2022+)

- Shortlisting will be carried out by at least two people.
- A record of shortlisting decisions will be retained.
- Online searches will be carried out for all shortlisted candidates in line with KCSIE to identify any concerns related to safeguarding, reputational risks, or extremist/radicalising behaviours.

- Information will be considered objectively and discussed with the candidate if relevant.

5. Interview and Exploring Gaps

- Interviews will be structured and include safeguarding-related questions.
- Any gaps in employment history will be explored and documented during the interview process.
- Notes will be retained with the recruitment file.

6. References

- Two supporting references will be required for every appointment, one of which must be from the most recent employer or education provider.
- References must come from a senior person in the organisation.
- References will be checked for authenticity, and a follow-up call will be made to verify information.
- References must be “open” references – not personal or character-only unless there is clear justification recorded.
- References will be scrutinised before interview where possible.

7. Conditional Offer & Vetting Checks

For all appointments, the following pre-employment checks are required:

- Enhanced DBS check (with barred-list where appropriate)
- Identity verification
- Right to work in the UK
- Verification of qualifications and professional registration
- Medical fitness
- Employment history scrutiny and reference verification

8. Prohibition from Teaching Checks (Mandatory)

- A prohibition from teaching check will be completed for anyone appointed to a teaching post, including tutors delivering curriculum teaching, cover supervisors, unqualified teaching staff, and supply teachers.
- This check is completed via the DfE Teacher Services portal.

9. Section 128 Management Barring Checks (AP Requirement)

In accordance with KCSIE, Section 128 checks will be carried out for:

- Proprietors
- Management committee members
- SLT/Leadership posts
- Anyone with management responsibility (including heads of department, heads of service, pastoral leads etc.)

Alternative Provision (AP) settings frequently miss this requirement; therefore, Tree of Life will ensure that these checks are documented and available for inspection by Ofsted or the Local Authority

10. Low-Level Concerns Procedure

Tree of Life recognises the KCSIE definition of Low-Level Concerns:

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how minor, that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, or
- does not meet the threshold for an allegation but may indicate a safeguarding risk.

Staff must report low-level concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). All low-level concerns will be recorded, reviewed, and dealt with proportionately. These procedures link directly to the Tree of Life Staff Code of Conduct.

11. Probationary Period

- All newly appointed staff will be subject to a probationary period.
- During probation, safeguarding behaviour, conduct, and role competence will be closely monitored.
- Employment will only be confirmed following a satisfactory safeguarding assessment.

12. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders

Tree of Life complies with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and the DBS Code of Practice.

Where convictions or relevant information are disclosed:

- The disclosure will be treated confidentially and assessed objectively.
- We will consider the nature, seriousness, relevance to the post, safeguarding risks, and the time elapsed.
- A documented risk assessment may be used where appropriate.

13. Data Protection, Record Keeping & GDPR

- Recruitment information will be stored securely and retained only as long as necessary and in line with data protection legislation.
- DBS certificates will not be retained; only the certificate number, type of check, and outcome will be recorded.
- Access to vetting information is strictly limited to authorised safeguarding staff.

14. Single Central Record (SCR)

- Tree of Life maintains a fully compliant SCR which includes all statutory vetting information, including Section 128 and prohibition from teaching checks.
- Records must be available to Ofsted upon request.

15. Monitoring, Review and Audit

- This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes.
- Compliance will be monitored through the SCR, recruitment files, and safeguarding oversight.