



Vita et Pax
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Established 1936

Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Originator	Head Teacher
Approved by	Governing Body
Date Approved	1 March 2026
Status	Statutory
Review Period	Annually (next: March 2027)

1. Purpose and Scope

Vita et Pax Preparatory School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We recognise that safer recruitment is a vital part of creating a safe environment for children. This policy sets out the school's approach to recruiting staff and volunteers safely, fairly and consistently.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, governors, agency workers, contractors and any other adults who work at or provide services to the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, particularly Part 3.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended).
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.
- The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018.
- The Equality Act 2010.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Proprietorial Body ensures the school has effective safer recruitment procedures and that all regulatory requirements are met. The Chair of the Proprietorial Body ensures that enhanced DBS checks are carried out on all members of the proprietorial body.

- The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and ensures that at least one person on every interview panel has completed accredited safer recruitment training.
- The DSL (Darren May) liaises with the Head Teacher on any safeguarding concerns that arise during the recruitment process.
- All staff involved in recruitment are expected to understand and follow this policy.

3. Advertising and Applications

All recruitment materials and advertisements will:

- Include a clear statement of the school's commitment to safeguarding.
- Reference the requirement for an enhanced DBS check.
- Provide a full job description and person specification.
- State that the school is committed to equality of opportunity.

All applicants must complete the school's standard application form in full. CVs alone are not accepted. The application form includes a section for the applicant to disclose any relevant criminal convictions or cautions (in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, as amended). Any gaps in employment history must be explained. The form also requires details of two referees, one of whom must be the current or most recent employer.

4. Shortlisting

All applications are scrutinised to ensure they are fully completed and that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Shortlisting is carried out against the person specification for the role. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment are noted and explored at interview.

5. References

References are an important part of the recruitment process. The school will:

- Obtain two references prior to interview, one of which must be from the current or most recent employer. If the candidate is not currently working with children, a reference will be sought from the employer with whom they most recently worked with children.
- Not accept open references or testimonials.
- Verify all references by telephone or email to confirm authenticity.
- Request specific information about the candidate's suitability to work with children, any disciplinary issues, and whether any allegations or concerns have been raised.
- Explore any vague, ambiguous or incomplete references with the referee directly.
- Ensure references are obtained from institutional email addresses, not personal accounts.

6. Interviews

All candidates are interviewed in person by a panel of at least two people, including at least one member who has completed accredited safer recruitment training (in line with KCSIE 2025). The interview will:

- Explore the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- Include safeguarding-focused questions, including the candidate's understanding of safeguarding, their motivation for working with children, and how they would respond to concerns about a child.
- Explore any gaps in employment, discrepancies in the application, or information arising from references.
- Probe the candidate's attitude towards safeguarding, behaviour management and professional boundaries.
- Verify the candidate's identity against photographic ID and other original documents.

7. Pre-Appointment Checks

An offer of appointment is conditional upon satisfactory completion of all pre-appointment checks as required by KCSIE 2025 Part 3. No person will start work at the school until all required checks have been completed and confirmed satisfactory. In exceptional circumstances, a risk assessment may allow a person to start pending a DBS check, but they must not be left unsupervised with children.

The following checks are carried out for all staff:

- Identity verification — original documents (passport, driving licence, birth certificate).
- Right to work in the UK — in accordance with Home Office guidance.
- Enhanced DBS check with barred list check — for all staff engaged in regulated activity. The school registers with the DBS Update Service where possible.
- Prohibition from teaching check — via the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) for all teaching staff, including unqualified teachers and those from overseas.
- Section 128 direction check — for all governors, members of the proprietorial body, and staff in management positions. This check identifies individuals barred from participation in the management of independent schools.
- Professional qualifications — verification of certificates for the role, including QTS where applicable.
- Two satisfactory references — obtained and verified as described in Section 5.
- Medical fitness — a health declaration confirming fitness to undertake the role.
- Employment history — a full chronological history with any gaps explained.
- Overseas checks — where a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, additional checks are obtained, including a certificate of good conduct or equivalent from the relevant country, and checks via the TRA for EEA teacher sanctions.
- Childcare disqualification declaration — for staff working in EYFS or providing before/after school care for children under 8, in line with the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018.

8. Agency Staff, Supply Staff and Contractors

The school must obtain written confirmation from any agency or third-party organisation that appropriate checks have been carried out on their staff before they begin work at the school. Specifically:

- Written notification from the agency that an enhanced DBS check (with barred list check where appropriate) has been obtained and that the individual is not barred from working with children.
- Identity verification is carried out on arrival — the school checks the individual's identity against photographic ID to confirm they are the person the checks relate to.
- The school will not allow supply staff to begin work unless the above steps have been completed.
- Contractors who will have unsupervised access to children are subject to the same level of checks as directly employed staff.
- Contractors who do not have unsupervised access to children must be appropriately supervised at all times.

9. Volunteers

Volunteers who are in regulated activity (i.e., unsupervised access to children on a regular basis) are subject to the same checks as paid staff, including an enhanced DBS check with barred list check. Volunteers who are not in regulated activity but have the opportunity for contact with children are subject to a risk assessment to determine whether an enhanced DBS check (without barred list) is appropriate. All volunteers receive a safeguarding induction before starting.

10. Governors and Members of the Proprietorial Body

All governors and members of the proprietorial body undergo the following checks:

- Enhanced DBS check with barred list check (as they are in regulated activity by virtue of their role).
- Section 128 direction check.
- Identity verification.
- Right to work in the UK.
- Any other checks considered appropriate by the Chair.

The Chair of the proprietorial body ensures that these checks are completed for all members, including themselves (with checks on the Chair arranged by another member or the school's legal advisers).

11. Trainee Teachers and Students on Placement

Where the school accepts trainee teachers or students on placement, it will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that all necessary checks have been carried out. The school will also verify the identity of trainees on their first day and ensure they receive a safeguarding induction.

12. Single Central Record (SCR)

The school maintains a Single Central Record of all pre-appointment checks for every individual who works at the school, including:

- All staff (including supply staff and agency workers).
- All governors and members of the proprietorial body.
- All volunteers in regulated activity.

The SCR is maintained electronically via OnlineSCR and records the following for each individual: identity check, DBS certificate (number, date, level), barred list check, right to work, qualifications, prohibition check, Section 128 check, overseas checks, and childcare disqualification declaration where applicable.

The SCR is reviewed regularly by the DSL and audited termly by the proprietorial body to ensure compliance. It is available for inspection at all times.

13. Conditional Offers and Induction

All offers of employment are conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-appointment checks. Once appointed, all new staff and volunteers receive a comprehensive safeguarding induction which includes:

- The school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
- Part 1 (and Annex B) of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.
- The staff code of conduct and behaviour policy.
- The identity and role of the DSL and Deputy DSL.
- The school's reporting procedures for safeguarding concerns.
- The Whistleblowing Policy.
- The school's IT Acceptable Use Policy.
- Fire safety and emergency procedures.

14. DBS Update Service and Portability

The school encourages all staff to subscribe to the DBS Update Service, which allows the school to check the status of a DBS certificate online. Where a new employee has subscribed to the Update Service, the school will carry out a free online status check. If the check reveals any changes, or if the individual is not registered with the Update Service, a new enhanced DBS check will be obtained.

The school does not routinely accept DBS certificates obtained by another organisation unless registered with the Update Service and the status check confirms no changes.

15. Retention and Security of Records

Recruitment records (application forms, interview notes, references) are retained securely for the duration of employment plus six months (in line with DfE guidance). DBS certificate numbers are recorded on the SCR but the certificates themselves are not retained for longer than six months. All records are stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

16. Referrals to the DBS and TRA

The school has a legal duty to refer to the DBS any person who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to, a child, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The school will also consider whether a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) is appropriate for cases involving serious teacher misconduct.

17. Equality and Non-Discrimination

All recruitment decisions are based on suitability and merit. The school does not discriminate on the grounds of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. Having a criminal record will not automatically prevent a person from being appointed; each case is assessed individually based on the nature of the offence, its relevance to the role, and the time elapsed since the offence.

18. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body. The school monitors the effectiveness of its safer recruitment procedures through regular audits of the SCR, feedback from interview panels, and oversight by the proprietorial body. Any concerns about the recruitment process are reported to the Head Teacher and the Chair of Governors.

Approved by: Governing Body of Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Date: 1 March 2026