

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Date created: July 2001

Effective from: June 2014

Date last revised: September 2025

Approved by: Trustees

Review date: September 2026

Contact person: Education Lead

1. Context

This policy should be read alongside The Children's Literacy Charity's (the charity) Safeguarding policy.

2. Definitions

As set out in guidance from the Safe Network (www.safenetwork.org.uk) this policy uses the terms 'safeguarding', 'promoting children's welfare' and 'child protection' consistently with *Working Together 2013*. This defines safeguarding as

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

Child protection is *part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.*

3. Scope

This policy and guidance applies to anyone responsible for recruiting, selecting and inducting staff and volunteers at the charity and everyone who takes part in short listing and interview panels.

4. Policy statement

The Children's Literacy Charity is committed to promoting the welfare of children and young people and keeping them safe.

We are also committed to equality, valuing diversity and working inclusively across all of our activities. The charity is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talents, skills and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience.

We aim to have a staff and volunteer workforce that represent a variety of backgrounds, cultures and can provide the relevant knowledge, abilities and skills for our organisation.

This policy has been created to support the charity to:

- recruit and select the best people available to join our staff and volunteer team
- take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from joining our organisation
- recruit, select and manage our staff and support our volunteers in a way that complies with legislation designed to combat inequality and discrimination in order to do all we can to achieve and maintain a diverse staff and volunteer team
- ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are consistent and transparent
- ensure that new members of staff and new volunteers are given a fit for purpose, comprehensive induction

We recognise that:

- our staff and volunteer team are our most important resource
- unsuitable individuals sometimes seek out opportunities via employment or volunteering to have contact with children in order to harm them
- some groups face unfair discrimination as staff or volunteers
- children, young people and families benefit from our efforts to recruit and select a skilled and committed staff and volunteer team from a diverse range of backgrounds
- new staff and volunteers cannot perform their roles effectively unless they are properly inducted and receive ongoing support and supervision

In practice this means we will:

- create person specifications and role descriptions for all staff and volunteer posts
- make our commitment to safeguarding clear within our recruitment information
- ensure the Safer Recruitment Policy is accessible to applicants via The CLC website
- ensure all applications for both paid and volunteer positions give sufficient detail and are of a high standard
- involve more than one person to shortlist applicants for interview
- have at least 2 people conducting face-to-face interviews for paid positions and assess candidates against agreed criteria
- obtain 2 references, 3 pieces of identification and original copies of any necessary qualifications from candidates before appointment
- process a new DBS check (with barred list checks for anyone in regulated activity) and will repeat these DBS checks on the anniversary of the previous check date every 3 years.
- provide schools with data on DBS checks and other relevant information for all staff and volunteers working with each school
- where their post is eligible we require staff and volunteers to complete a Childcare Disqualification form before any employment commences.
- provide an appropriate, comprehensive induction for all new staff and volunteers
- ensure that all staff are made aware, during their induction period, of how to keep children and young people safe in our organisation
- appoint all staff on a probation period initially, with a review before they are confirmed in post
- ensure all staff and volunteers have access to regular supervision, support and annual staff appraisal or volunteer review as well as annual safeguarding training.
- ensure that the person responsible for recruitment and/or HR Officer has completed Safer Recruitment Training on a regular basis.

Single Central Record

We maintain a Single Central Record of all checks. Checks include:

- Identity check
- An enhanced DBS check (with barred list check)
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK
- A check of professional qualifications where required
- Check to establish person's right to work in the UK

Further checks on individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK in compliance with KCSIE 2023

The Children's Literacy Charity will carry out the same checks as for all other staff for individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK. This includes obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate (including children's barred list information) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, we will make any further checks that we deem appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. Following the UK's exit from the EU, the same approach will be applicable for any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK regardless of whether or not it was in an EEA country or the rest of the world.

These checks could include, where available:

- Criminal records checks for overseas applicants
- For teaching positions, obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.

Where available, such evidence will be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess their suitability.

Where this information is not available the Children's Literacy Charity will seek alternative methods of checking suitability and or undertake a risk assessment that supports informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment.

Although sanctions and restrictions imposed by another regulating authority do not prevent a person from taking up teaching positions in England, we will consider the circumstances that led to the restriction or sanction being imposed when considering a candidate's suitability for employment.

Not all countries provide criminal record information, and where they do, the nature and detail of the information provided varies from country to country. We will also be mindful that the criteria for disclosing offences in other countries often have a different threshold than those in the UK.

It is noted that holding a teaching qualification (wherever it was obtained) does not provide suitable assurances for safeguarding purposes that an individual has not been found guilty of any wrongdoing or misconduct, and/or is suitable to work with children. It is therefore imperative that we carry out all necessary checks prior to an individual starting work.

Statement on the recruitment of ex-offenders

The Children's Literacy Charity complies fully with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. We will not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed.

All application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that the Disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Unless the nature of the position allows the charity to ask questions about the entire criminal record, we only ask about "unspent" convictions as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We ensure that those who are involved in the recruitment process have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences. We also ensure that they have received appropriate guidance and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences. A decision will be made based on a thorough risk assessment of the position and will be discussed with the candidate directly.

It is the responsibility of staff employed at the charity to make their line manager aware if anything related to their DBS status and self-disclosure changes during the period of their employment, for example if they incur a criminal record which would be disclosed during a subsequent check.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- It is the recruiting manager's responsibility to ensure the policy above is followed.
- The trustee responsible for safeguarding is Andrew Martin.
- The designated safeguarding lead officer is Julie Taylor.
- The deputy designated safeguarding officers are Beata Gawthrop (Programme Delivery Manager) and Claudette Taylor (Schools Programme Manager).