



BERKELEY GUARDIANS

Home from Home

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY 2023

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Designated Safeguarding Lead
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POLICY REVISION RECORD (annual reviews)

Date	Section	Revision	Updated/Written by
10/07/2020		Reviewed	Karen Pickles
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Guardianship Safer Recruitment Policy

Policy Statement

Berkeley Guardians is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at all times whilst they are under our care and we adhere to the principles of the statutory 'Safer Recruitment' guidance as stated in KCSIE 2023 and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Safer Recruitment advice. BG also refers closely to the NMS (National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools) in its homestay recruitment.

Our Safer Recruitment policy aims to help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. At every stage of the process, Berkeley Guardians ensures its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is highlighted.

Aims

The aims of the policy are:

- To ensure we address and meet the commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks as part of the Safer Recruitment process
- To ensure that the highest quality staff and homestays are recruited on their experience, qualifications and suitability for the advertised role in line with relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance
- To ensure that no applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the advertised role based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification. If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

Recruitment Procedure for Staff

Advertising

Berkeley Guardians follows a recruitment process to ensure that all expectations are clearly advertised and laid out in the initial stages. The job role and person specification is sent out to ensure that there is a high expectation of safeguarding responsibility expected and that the role involves working with children and young people.

All advertisements follow the Safer Recruitment Process and ensure that it is clear an enhanced DBS, the right to work in the UK and a completed application form is required along with 2 references from professional sources. Berkeley Guardians does not accept a CV without an application form completed. Completed application forms and accompanying CV's are stored securely on a confidential computer drive by Berkeley Guardians.

The homestay responds to the advertisement by completing an online enquiry form. Applicants must be over 25 years of age and be suitable to work with children.

The Application Form

The application form and other relevant information will be sent to those interested parties who apply and will require:

- full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address and National Insurance number
- a statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications that the applicant has obtained, relevant to the position for which s/he is applying, with details of the awarding body and date of award
- a full history, in chronological order, since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training, part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start and end dates along with explanations for periods not in employment, education or training and reasons for leaving employment
- a declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers
- details of 2 referees – at least one referee should be the applicant’s current or most recent employer and the other should be a professional wherever possible – no references will be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friendship
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification
- Applicants will be asked to declare that they are not disqualified from working with children or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory or professional body, and has no convictions, cautions or bind overs. There will be a self-disclosure process introduced to ensure the applicant has an opportunity to raise all information in a confidential way. Any disclosures can be discussed with them prior to or at interview (pending receipt of the completed enhanced DBS check)
- If the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, their current employer with children will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children. Providing false information may be an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected and possible referral to the police
- The application form will vary whether homestay application or office/guardian style post to ensure that relevant information is captured

Job Description

Once a post becomes vacant, or a new post is created, Berkeley Guardians will review the job description to ensure compliance with the Safer Recruitment guidance.

The job description states the main duties and responsibilities of the post; and the individual’s responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children to which s/he is responsible.

Shortlisting applications (office/guardian roles)

Two members of staff are responsible for scrutinising applications and short-listing candidates. At least one member of the panel is Safer Recruitment trained. All applications are checked to ensure they are fully and properly completed, that the information is consistent, does not contain any discrepancies and to ensure that any gaps in employment are identified.

As per the Safer Recruitment guidance, incomplete application forms will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

References

Any gaps in employment will be noted and considered during the short-listing process. In addition, reasons for any repeated changes of employment without a clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work will also be explored and verified. All applicants will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation and without unlawful discrimination.

Berkeley Guardians seek references from each application to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee with comments requested on work, professional competence and personal qualities. In the case of a potential member of staff, references will be requested from the candidate's current employer if an applicant is currently employed.

Referees are asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children, to outline any concerns about the applicant with children or any disciplinary details and all references must be addressed to Berkeley Guardians and not in the form of a general reference (to whom it may concern). Where electronic references are received, the guardianship organisation should ensure they originate from a legitimate source. References are always obtained in writing and telephone contact made to verify the reference.

On receipt, references are checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee is contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example if the answers are vague or if insufficient information is provided. They are also compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies are taken up with the candidate.

Any offer of employment will always be conditional on the receipt of 2 satisfactory references.

Interviews

In addition to the arrangements for interviews – time and place, directions to the venue, membership of the interview panel – the invitation reminds candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children. Enclosing a copy of the person specification can usefully draw attention to the relevant information.

The invitation also stresses that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be, and that where an

enhanced DBS Disclosure is appropriate the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS Disclosure straight away. Consequently all candidates are instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy the requirements when applying for an enhanced DBS, i.e. either a current driving licence or passport including a photograph, or a full birth certificate, plus a recent document (within the last three months) such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address and where appropriate change of name documentation. In addition, where the candidate needs permission to work in the UK, they must produce this documentation at the interview for checking and verification.

In the case of homestay families, Enhanced DBS checks are required for all members of the homestay aged 16 and over and any other temporary or regular resident. A member of Berkeley Guardians will visit the homestay and follow the procedures as set out in the application form, inspection form and if accepted, the induction form

Candidates are also asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of his or her relevant qualifications should be obtained from the awarding body wherever possible.

A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications are kept for the personnel file. Separate copies of documents are not required to be kept in order to meet the requirements of maintaining the single central record.

Wherever possible, Berkeley Guardians will obtain references for short-listed candidates prior to the interview. If candidates ask that references are not sought prior to interview, any provisional offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory references being obtained.

The interview will be conducted by at least two people who will have met before the interview to agree the required standard for the role, consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and how the interview will be conducted. At least one of the two people on the interview panel must be Safer Recruitment trained and competency based questions agreed upon.

The panel will agree the questions they will ask candidates during the interview, the issues that may have been identified in the application form and references that may need exploring. This should include:

- Candidates approach to children and how they promote the welfare of children in their present role
- Their commitment to the safeguarding levels required of them and any gaps in employment history
- Anything to come from references which have previously been received
- Social media – anything that has shown up in checks
- LEA checks – anything that has shown up in these checks
- Any areas the candidate would like to discuss or bring to BG attention

Conditional Offer of Appointment

The interview process will ask the candidate to produce original documentation of any educational or professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant to the post. A copy of the documents used to verify the candidate's identity, right to work in the UK and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file. These should be checked, signed and dated by the verifier. Confirmation that these documents have been inspected should be recorded on the interview form. The successful candidate will be conditional upon the receipt of at least two satisfactory references, proof of identification, proof of right to work in the UK (if appropriate), an enhanced DBS check, verification of qualifications where they are a requirement of the post and the completion of any probationary period.

Berkeley Guardians will follow relevant DBS guidance if a check reveals information that a candidate has not disclosed in the course of the selection process. Enhanced DBS checks will always be followed up where the results are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

Where the candidate is found to be disqualified from working with children by a court; or an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application; or there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children, the facts must be reported to the police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service by the DSL.

Berkeley Guardians requests all staff and Homestays complete a medical declaration on appointment. This information will be kept confidentially and securely.

Induction

Newly appointed staff and homestays must have an induction programme to complete, regardless of previous experience. The induction programme includes policy and procedure training, details of the support available for individuals in their new role, confirmation of the Staff Code of Conduct, and provides opportunities for new staff members to discuss any issues or concerns.

The content and nature of the induction will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff, however, it will always include the safeguarding policy, staff and homestay code of conduct, how to report concerns, whistle-blowing policy and with who they should discuss any concerns about their role or responsibilities.

All new staff and homestays will be required to undergo training with King's River Education for safeguarding training and this will be required to be updated every three years, with annual updates for all staff from the DSL.

On-going training and monitoring

Berkeley Guardian staff and homestays receive regular face to face updates and emails containing safeguarding news. This is to ensure that guidance is regularly circulated and homestays have continual access to Level 1 (minimum) Safeguarding Training and regular NSPCC Safeguarding and Child Protection updates.

The homestay's initial visits and annual revisit process provides Berkeley Guardians with the infrastructure to continually monitor the quality of homestays. These visits check that the highest standards are afforded to our pupils.

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed.

The reviews should cover:

- staff turnover and reasons for leaving
- exit interviews
- attendance of new recruits and regular attendance of existing staff at child protection training or ensuring that online training is carried out and certificates held by Berkeley Guardians

Berkeley Guardians follow the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS) guidelines as part of an on-going accreditation process. This is to ensure our pupils receive the highest standards of homestay and care while under our guardianship.