

## VISION

To create an outstanding British international school which empowers all students to embrace learning, achieve their best, and promote their intellectual, emotional, social and physical wellbeing.



PEARLING SEASON INTERNATIONAL

## Safer Recruitment Policy

To create a community of learning within a safe, secure and happy environment where our children are motivated, challenged and supported in all they do. Our passion for learning and teaching will inspire our students, as will our warmth, humanity and transparency. Student achievement will be limitless, and they will leave with the confidence and capability that will equip them for every facet of adult life as a global citizen.

## MISSION

Policy Date: December 2020  
Revised: Mr Ahmed Al-Talib  
Review Date: December 2022  
Person Responsible: Mr Clive Shepherd

# Document Revision Page

This page is used to record information about changes (additions, modifications and deletions) that have been made to this document.

Revision Date	Section & Title	Page No.	Summary	Authors

## **INTRODUCTION**

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Pearling Season International School (PSI) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff, shadow teachers and volunteers to share this commitment. (Refer to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.)

In line with Qatari legal requirements, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019 (KCSIE) and The Standards for British Schools Overseas November 2016, the School takes very seriously its duty of care for all pupils. In order to help safeguard and promote the welfare of all its pupils the School is committed to the implementation of a thorough and consistent Safer Recruitment Policy.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims of the School's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position, which includes their attitudes towards safeguarding and their ability to work with children in a way which promotes the safety and welfare of children;
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex, marital, disability or age;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance;
- to ensure that the School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks and by conducting the recruitment process in a way which prevents as far as possible the recruitment of individuals who are unsuitable to work with children.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of the Head of Human Resources to:

- ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff, governors, shadow teachers and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and standards, and Qatari legal requirements; monitor the School's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the Principal, Head of Human Resources and all senior leaders involved in recruitment to:

- ensure that the School operates safe recruitment procedures and make sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, shadow teachers and volunteers who work at the School;
- monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document;
- promote the welfare of children at every stage of the procedure.

## **RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND VETTING CHECKS**

### **Advertising positions**

Advertisements for all permanent positions are placed on the School website (<http://www.PSIchool.ch/about/work-with-us>). In addition, adverts are published in other suitable places (e.g. international recruitment job websites or the TES jobs website) depending on the position available.

All job adverts make clear the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

A link to our Safer Recruitment Policy is published alongside job adverts or on the School website. A copy of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on the School's website or in hard copy to applicants on request.

### **Application Form**

All applicants for employment are required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. The School will only consider candidates who have completed the application form in full. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed. Should there be any gaps in academic or employment history, a satisfactory explanation must be provided. A curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed application form but may be submitted in addition.

### **References**

All offers of employment are subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references that are considered satisfactory by the School. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second referee should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children (if applicable). Neither referee should be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend.

Referees are asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children.

Referees are sent a copy of the relevant job description and person specification. If the referee is a current or previous employer, he/she will also be asked to confirm the following:

- the applicant's dates of employment, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record;
- whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired), except where the issues were deemed to have resulted from allegations which were found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious; and
- whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children, except where the allegation or concerns were found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

The School will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant, nor on open references or testimonials. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact, either by telephone or face-to-face, will be made with each referee to verify the reference and to check that there are no child protection concerns.

## **Identity Checks**

These will be carried out on all appointments to the School's workforce before an appointment is made. All applicants invited to interview will be required to bring or submit via email proofs of identity (refer to the procedures below).

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) he/she will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. The School asks for the date of birth of all applicants (and proof of this). Proof of date of birth is necessary so that the School can verify the identity of candidates and check for any unexplained discrepancies in their employment and education history. The School does not discriminate on the grounds of age, although to attain a work visa in Qatar the requirement is below 60 years old. Also, the school will seek approval from MOHE who requires that teachers working in Qatar are 50 years old or below.

Should an applicant arrive for an interview without the above documentary evidence without good cause, the interview may be cancelled, and the School may choose not to progress their application further even upon subsequent submission of the documentation.

## **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks**

Although not a COBIS accredited school, the school follows COBIS protocols and procedures for its disclosure and barring service. On 11 June 2018, COBIS informed schools that enhanced and standard DBS checks are no longer available to British Schools overseas. Until that date, we had been able to use the COBIS service for obtaining DBS certificates.

The School will follow the advice issued by COBIS in June 2018, which is to complete:

- prohibition checks;
- International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) checks,
- police clearance checks from previous country of residence;

for all members of staff, visiting teachers and volunteers (paid and voluntary) who work with children.

In addition, PSI will obtain local criminal records checks (United Kingdom) and, as far as possible, clearance checks from other countries in which the candidate has lived.

If there is a delay in receiving any of these checks the Principal has discretion to allow an individual to begin work pending their receipt. A risk assessment, including the need for appropriate supervision, will be completed and signed by the Principal before the person starts work and will be updated every two weeks.

If a check identifies a criminal record, the Principal will make a judgement about the candidate's suitability, taking into account those offences which may be relevant to the particular job or situation in question.

Members of staff at PSI are made aware of their obligation to inform the Principal of any cautions or convictions that arise subsequent to their commencing employment at the School.

## **Checks from countries other than the UK**

Applicants with periods of residence outside the UK are asked to provide further information, including a criminal records / police clearance check from the relevant jurisdiction(s).

## **International Child Protection Certificate**

Now that enhanced and standard DBS checks are no longer available to British Schools overseas, the successful applicant will, with assistance from the Head of HR, be required to apply for an ICPC via the following website for the ACRO Criminal Records Office: <https://www.acro.police.uk/icpc/>

## **Medical Fitness**

Anyone appointed to a post involving regular contact with children must possess the appropriate level of physical and mental fitness before an appointment offer is confirmed. All successful applicants are required to complete a fit to work medical declaration and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required.

## **Qualifications**

Candidates must be able to demonstrate they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualifications legally required for the post and claimed in their application.

## **Interviews**

In addition to discussion of relevant skills and experience, candidates will be asked questions relating to child protection in order to ascertain the level of their knowledge and the suitability of their answers. It is recognised that not all interviewees will have child protection experience within schools. In such cases, questions will be adapted to test applicants' responses to hypothetical safeguarding scenarios. At least one member of staff involved with every appointment process will have received safer recruitment training (e.g. through Educare). In addition, any member of staff responsible for assessing pre-employment checks will have received the relevant training.

All candidates applying to work directly with children, either as teachers or teaching assistants, will be observed interacting with children.

## **Contractors and External Shadow Teachers**

The School will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor who is to work at the School, has been subject to the appropriate level of criminal records check. Contractors engaged in regulated activity (as defined in KCSIE 2018) or whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children will require criminal records checks. Occasional or temporary contractors not involved in regulated activity will not need a criminal record check but an appropriate level of supervision will be arranged.

External shadow teachers are staff supplied by a business, parent, or agency to work under the control of the School. Agencies who supply staff to the School must also complete the pre-employment checks that the School would otherwise complete for its staff (identity, right to work in Qatar, qualifications where appropriate, suitability to work with children to the extent relevant to that person). The School requires confirmation in writing, obtained via its Background Checks Request Form, that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the School. A copy of the criminal records certification must be seen by the School. In addition, the School will also verify (by asking to see identity documents) that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made. Before the person commences work, the School will conduct an interview in order to satisfy itself that he/she is suitable for the work for which he/she is being supplied.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers engaging in regulated activity or whose work involves, or provides the opportunity for, regular contact with children will require the same level of recruitment checks as employed members of staff.

Prior to engaging a volunteer to carry out any activities for or on behalf of the School, the Principal will decide what vetting checks are required, or whether it is appropriate to carry out a risk assessment. Appendix 3 will be used for reference.

### **Visiting Speakers**

As is the case for all visitors to the School, visiting speakers will be accompanied by a member of staff for the duration of their time at the School. The Principal and relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead must be made aware in advance of any visiting speaker coming to the School and a risk assessment form completed in advance. If the profile of the speaker or the topic on which they have been invited to speak indicates that they may, either intentionally or not, pose a risk of endorsing, condoning or inciting extremist political or religious views, the speaker's visit will not be permitted.

### **Retention and security of disclosure information**

The School's policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the DBS on the use of disclosure information. We will:

- store disclosure information in locked, non-portable storage containers, access to which will be restricted to the Principal and Head of HR;
- not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary, which is generally for a period of up to six months. If, in exceptional circumstances it is considered necessary to keep disclosure information for longer than six months, we will consult the DBS about this and will give full consideration to the data protection and human rights of the individual before doing so. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.
- ensure that, once the retention period has elapsed, any disclosure information is destroyed by suitably secure means such as shredding. Whilst awaiting destruction, disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack).

We will keep a record of the date of issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested and the position for which the disclosure was requested.

### **Retention of records**

If an applicant is successful in their application, the School will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in Qatar, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the School to discharge its obligations as an employer (e.g. so that the School may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue).

This documentation will be retained by the School for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the School. It will be retained for a period of ten years after employment terminates, after which it will be securely destroyed.

If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will be confidentially destroyed after six months.

### **Referral to the DBS**

This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that apply to any offer of employment. Whilst these checks are carried out pre-employment, the School will also refer to the DBS:

- any applicant who has applied for a position at the School despite being barred from working with children;
- anyone 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.

### **Queries**

If an applicant has any queries on how to complete the application form or any other matter, he/she should contact the Head of Human Resources.



# RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

## Vacancy

The vacancy and its requirements are discussed by the SLT. The following are agreed:

How and where to advertise. Permanent positions are always advertised. Occasionally, if it is felt to be appropriate, we may use an agency to supply candidates for interview.

Composition of the interview panel, including the Principal or member of SLT. The Principal or a member of SLT will always have undertaken safer recruitment training (e.g. via Educare).

## When to interview

Who will read and shortlist applications (always including the Principal)

Elements of the interview programme, including observed lessons, tours and which member of the panel will ask safeguarding and child protection questions. This person must have up to date child protection training.

The Principal apprises the Head of HR and the Principal's PA.

The line manager/appropriate member of SLT/Principal draw up the advertisement, job description and person specification, which are checked by the line manager, Principal and Head of HR.

## Advertisements

For internally advertised temporary positions (e.g. a maternity cover for which suitably qualified teaching assistants might apply) the Principal sends an email to all members of staff with details of the post and how to apply.

In all other cases the advertisement, job description and person specification are placed on the school website by the Head of HR, via the Communications.

The Head of HR may also place the advertisement in other agreed locations. Permanent teaching positions are usually advertised in the TES online.

## Applications

Applications are sent by email to the Head of HR, who acknowledge PSI receipt. The Head of HR checks and collates applications, to which only the Principal, Head of HR and members of the Senior Leadership Team have access. If there is time, incomplete applications (or applications with unsuitable referees) will be returned to candidates by the Head of HR.

## Interview programme

The Principal or a member of SLT draws up a draft interview programme and circulates it to members of the interview panel, the Head of HR and the Principal's PA before finalising. The programme should include an agreed time for the panel's decision meeting.

## Shortlisting

Shortlisting of candidates for interview is carried out as soon as possible after the deadline for applications, having due regard to the School's commitment to equal opportunities and fair treatment for potential staff, regardless of race, gender, religion, responsibilities for dependants, age or disability.

All members of the shortlisting panel complete a shortlisting document. All the forms are then passed to the Head of HR.

### **References**

As soon as a shortlist of candidates to invite to interview has been drawn up, the Head of HR will request references (at least two for each candidate), taking due note of whether or not the candidate has given their consent for the School to contact referees before interview. The School asks referees to complete their reference using the School's reference request form.

As they arrive, the Head of HR will print references and place in a confidential folder and send notifications to members of the interview panel.

The Head of HR compares all references with the information given on the application form. Any inconsistencies, anomalies, doubts about the validity of the reference, or expressions of concern about the candidate will be discussed with the Principal and followed up appropriately.

The Head of HR makes direct contact, either via a work telephone number or face to face, with each referee to verify the authenticity of all references and to check that there are no child protection concerns, making a handwritten note (with initials and date) on a 'master' paper copy of the reference to show that this has been done. It is an offence to falsify references. Applicants or referees who are found to have submitted false references to the School will be referred to the Qatar's Ministry of Education.

Any offer made by the School will always be subject to the receipt of two references that are deemed satisfactory by the School and on satisfactory recruitment and medical checks.

The Principal will check and initial the master copy of each reference and return to the Head of HR.

### **Invitation to interview**

As soon as a shortlist of candidates to invite to interview has been drawn up, the Head of HR will contact the candidates by phone and/or email and follow up with an invitation to attend for interview.

### **Interviews**

- As part of the interview process the Principal of the panel will ensure that:
- a set of agreed questions and/or tasks is prepared before the interviews.
- any identified gaps in candidates' education or employment record are followed up with the candidate. A candidate's explanation of any gaps will be recorded and initialled by the interviewer on his/her paper copy of the application form, which will then be the 'master' that is returned to the Head of HR for filing.
- appropriate child protection questions are asked by a member of the panel who has up to date training in child protection.
- notes are made by members of the panel during the interviews.

- notes are taken by members of the panel observing lessons if interview is conducted in school and a lesson observation is required.

### **Panel meeting and decision**

The Principal will conduct the panel meeting, which will lead to a decision about which, if any, of the candidates should be offered the position. The Principal will inform the Head of HR and the Principal's PA of the decisions made.

### **Verbal offer**

The initial job and salary offer will be made by the Head of HR by email (or in person). Unless the offer is declined, the successful applicant should be reminded that the offer is conditional upon the receipt of two satisfactory written references (unless already received), satisfactory recruitment checks and a satisfactory response to the medical declaration form.

### **Formal written offer and acceptance of the position**

Using relevant information provided by the Principal, the Head of HR will draft an offer letter ('letter of engagement'). Once checked and agreed by the Principal and CEO, the Head of HR will send these documents by email, together with the medical declaration form. The successful applicant should return signed/completed copies to the Head of HR. The Head of HR will inform the Principal and CEO when these documents have been received.

### **Recruitment checks**

In accordance with this policy, the Head of HR will begin the process of applying for the appropriate recruitment checks for the successful applicant.

### **Unsatisfactory reference(s), medical declaration or recruitment checks**

If the School deems a reference, medical declaration or recruitment check to be unsatisfactory, the Principal will contact the successful applicant and speak to him/her directly, either face to face or by telephone/video call. Unless there is a satisfactory explanation (e.g. a mistake on the form) the offer of employment will be withdrawn and reasons for this decision will be given.

### **Informing unsuccessful candidates after interview**

The Principal will liaise with the Head of HR regarding contacting unsuccessful candidates after interview. The rejection letter will then be sent by email via the Head of HR.

### **Feedback to unsuccessful candidates after interview**

We do not generally undertake to provide detailed feedback to unsuccessful candidates after interview unless we feel that there is something we could say or some advice we could give that would be genuinely helpful.

### **Notices to staff and parents**

The Head of HR will communicate the result of recruitment process to members of staff via email/staff briefing/notices.

Parents will then normally be informed by letter and/or newsletter at the appropriate time.

The school owner, Mrs. Maryam Khalid Al-Thani are informed of new recruits via the CEO termly.

### **Making contact with the successful applicant / arranging a visit**

Once the process is complete, the Head of HR will normally make contact with the successful applicant to begin the process of induction and integration. If already in Qatar, at least one pre-employment visit to the School will be arranged. The Head of School will take responsibility for this visit and will inform the Principal, Head of HR, Principal's PA, members of SLT and other relevant colleagues of the proposed date and programme.

### **Collation/retention/disposal of documents**

If not already received, the Head of HR will remind members of the interview panel to return:

- all shortlisting forms
- all interview/observation notes
- the interview assessment decision

The Head of HR is responsible for collecting these documents and for retaining them in accordance with this policy.

The Head of HR will also retain other documents associated with the recruitment process in accordance with the School's Data Management Policy. These include application forms, references, equal opportunities forms, medical declaration forms, recruitment checks, shortlisting forms, interview programmes, interview notes, interview assessment forms, relevant correspondence with candidates, signed offer letters and signed contracts.

## Appendix 2

### RECORD OF APPOINTMENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of appointment: \_\_\_\_\_

Start date in school: \_\_\_\_\_

(Where applicable)

	Date	Checked by
<b>Identity checks</b>		
<b>Qualifications</b>		
<b>DBS/UK criminal records check</b>		
<b>Police checks from other countries</b>		
<b>Right to work in Qatar</b>		
<b>References</b>		
<b>Application form</b>		
<b>Medically fit to work</b>		
<b>Head of HR's notes</b>		

## Appendix 3

### DOCUMENTATION

In liaison with the Principal, the Head of HR is responsible for reviewing and keeping up to date copies of all documentation associated with the School's recruitment process:

- Templates for job advertisements
- Application form
- Template invitation to interview
- Reference request forms
- Medical declaration form
- Template for acknowledging receipt of applications
- Template for writing to unsuccessful candidates after interview
- Interview assessment form
- Template for shortlisting forms
- Background check request form (for shadow teachers)
- Risk assessment form for volunteers
- Risk assessment form for staff commencing employment prior to receipt of criminal background check(s)
- Contracts and agreements