

Elysian Safer Recruitment Policy



Date of review: February 2024

Date of next review: February 2025

INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Elysian is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners in its care. As an employer, Elysian expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Safer Recruitment Policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse learners or are otherwise be unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of Elysian'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.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- To ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds of any protected characteristics.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance.
- To ensure that Elysian meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

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

Elysian has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

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.

Elysian aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to:

- Ensure Elysian has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor Elysian's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to:

- Ensure that Elysian operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers.
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of Elysian will amount to "regulated activity" if it is carried out:

- frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- satisfies the "period condition", meaning four times or more in a 30-day period; and
- provides the opportunity for contact with children and young people.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid/voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis.

Elysian is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". Elysian is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and advisory board members who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, Elysian can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, Elysian will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear Elysian's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with GDPR Legislation.

Application Forms

Elysian uses a recruitment process through Indeed and Eteach. All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Applicants submitting an incomplete application form may not be shortlisted.

The application form will include the applicant's declaration regarding convictions and working with children and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

It is unlawful for Elysian to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at Elysian. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children in a boarding environment.

References

References for successful candidates will always be taken up under all circumstances. All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by Elysian. 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 reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be 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 will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised, so that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

Elysian does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. It is Elysian's intention that young people will take part in the panel although this may not always be possible or practical. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria.

Any information regarding past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents only will be accepted, and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed 6 months after the recruitment programme.

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE and the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations Elysian carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- The agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating Elysian's standard terms and conditions of employment.
- Verification of the applicant's identity (if not previously been verified).
- The receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which Elysian considers to be satisfactory.
- A satisfactory disclosure from the DBS

For positions which involve regulated activity, the following conditions will also apply:

- Elysian being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working at Elysian or which, in Elysian's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at Elysian.
- Elysian being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at Elysian or which, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at Elysian.
- Confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List.
- Confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education

at a school, taking part in the management of an independent school or working in a position which involves regular contact with children;

- Where relevant, confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies, or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent school.
- Verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role.
- Verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK.
- Any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK.
- Verification of professional qualifications which Elysian deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where not previously verified).

Whether a position amounts to "regulated activity" must therefore be considered by Elysian in order to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in nearly all cases Elysian will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' must be declared when applying for any position at Elysian.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check

Elysian applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List in respect of all positions at Elysian which amount to "regulated activity". The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is Elysian's policy that the DBS disclosure must be obtained before the commencement of employment of any new employee.

It is Elysian's policy to re-check employees' DBS Certificates every five years and in addition any employee who takes leave for more than three months (i.e. maternity leave, career break etc) must be re-checked before they return back to work.

Members of staff at Elysian are aware of their obligation to inform the Executive Director of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

Portability of DBS Certificates Checks

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £13 per annum for an application concerning paid employment or free for a volunteer, which is payable by the applicant.

This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers.

Elysian will:

- Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search.
- Confirm the Certificate matches the individual's identity.
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, i.e. enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.

The Update check would identify and advise whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial Certificate was issued. Applicants will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers; therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificate to Executive Director (for employees within 7 days of issue or applicants before they commence work or any project involving regulated activity).

Dealing with convictions

Elysian operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and:

- The nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence
- How long ago the offence occurred
- One-off or history of offences
- Changes in circumstances
- Decriminalisation and remorse

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with two members of Senior Leadership. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Senior Leadership Team will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, Elysian may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Secretary of State Prohibition Orders (Teaching & Management roles)

In all cases where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind, a Prohibition Order check will be made. It is anticipated that this will be performed at offer stage. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in such a setting.

Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by the Teaching Regulation Agency. Pending such consideration, the Secretary of State may issue an interim prohibition order if it is considered to be in the public interest to do so.

A section 128 direction 39 prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an independent school. A person who is prohibited is unable to participate in any management of an independent school, a governor on any governing body in an independent school, or a management position that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities. A check for a section 128 direction will be carried out. Where the person will be engaging in regulated activity, a DBS barred list check will also identify any section 128 direction.

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

All applicants invited to attend an interview will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. Elysian does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Medical Fitness

Elysian is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post, after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role.

Elysian is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

Overseas checks

Elysian, in accordance with the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) may, if applicable, sponsor new foreign nationals (see Certificate of Sponsorship section).

In addition, applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal records check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory.

Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS)

If an appointed applicant is a national of a non-EEA country, a CoS may be required. Before any offer of employment is made, the Interviewing Managers should consult with the Executive Director to establish whether a Sponsorship Certificate is possible.

Criteria for issuing a CoS are:

- The job is in a "designated shortage" occupation

- It passes the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT)
- The job is at a sufficient level
- Minimum salary levels as stated by the UKVI are met

The process can take up to three months and staff cannot, under any circumstances, be employed until permission is given.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify Elysian policies and procedures, specifically the Safeguarding Policy including the Code of Conduct, KCSIE, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

ONGOING EMPLOYMENT

Single Centralised Register of Members of Staff

In addition to the various staff records kept at Elysian and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Administrator.

The Single Centralised Register will contain details of the following:

- All employees who are employed to work at Elysian
- All employees who are employed as supply staff to Elysian whether employed directly or through an agency
- All others who have been chosen by Elysian to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, Management Committee members, peripatetic staff and people brought in to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g. sports coaches etc.

The Heads of Education and Designated Safeguarding Leads, on each site, will be responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Register and reporting his/her findings to the Management Committee during each term meeting.

Record Retention/Data Protection

Elysian is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, Elysian 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 the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help Elysian to discharge its obligations as an employer, e.g. to consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with Elysian. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with Elysian activities.

Elysian will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed. The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

Ongoing Employment

Elysian recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. Elysian will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure

Leaving Employment at Elysian

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely, there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks Elysian also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- Has applied for a position despite being barred from working with children.
- Has been removed by Elysian from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, Elysian may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Contractors and agency staff

Contractors must complete the same checks for their employees that are required to complete for Elysian staff. Elysian requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work.

Agencies who supply staff to Elysian must also complete the pre-employment checks which Elysian would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, Elysian requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work.

Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires Elysian to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

Elysian is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children's Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of Elysian.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the usual visitors signing in protocol. This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitor's badge at all times and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments. All visitors will be given a copy of the Elysian Safeguarding Information for Visitors leaflet.

Elysian will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend.

"'Extremism' is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations."

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations Elysian does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

Volunteers

Elysian will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils at or on behalf of Elysian.

Under no circumstances will Elysian permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

A new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with Elysian for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits Elysian to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition, Elysian will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

Formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers

Character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source

An informal safer recruitment interview

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Heads of Education, on each site, will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored, followed and evaluated. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and a yearly Safer Recruitment Evaluation audit.

For the purposes of this policy, where the term Elysian is used, it refers to Elysian Animal Assisted Interventions including all Elysian provisions and sites.