

Safer Recruitment Policy

Issue date	7 th December 2023
Last reviewed date	1 st September 2025
Renewal date	1 st September 2027
Author	Joanna Mulgrew, Skills Academy Lead
Approved by	Joanna Mulgrew, Skills Academy Lead
Notes	Updated to align with “Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025”

1. Aims and Scope

Safe recruitment means taking all reasonable steps to ensure that only individuals who are suitable for working with adults, and/or vulnerable groups are appointed, while keeping both staff and service users safe from harm and risk.

This policy applies to HBXL Group as a whole, although there are additional requirements in place for the recruitment of staff to the HBXL Skills Academy who are more likely to come into contact with vulnerable adults as part of their work. Whilst the HBXL Skills Academy only delivers adult education programmes, the HBXL Skills Academy is committed to an enhanced approach to safeguarding, in line with the best practice set out in “Keeping children safe in education 2025”. The following process will be applied consistently when recruiting staff, contractors, or volunteers.

2. Advertising

When any form of advertising is used to recruit staff or volunteers, the following information will be reflected:

- The aims and values of the organisation and, where appropriate, details of the programme involved.
- A detailed role description specifying qualifications, experience, personal qualities, and behavioural standards required, and an outline of the checking procedures that will be conducted.
- A clear statement that the organisation is an equal opportunities employer operating in line with safeguarding standards.
- For roles within the HBXL Skills Academy, that an offer is subject to DBS checks.
- A statement that HBXL has a commitment to safeguarding adults and children, in line with the standards set out in DfE’s guidance on “Keeping children safe in education 2025”
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification.
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974.

3. Pre-application Information

Pre-application information sent to interested or potential applicants will include:

- Role description and responsibilities.
- Person specification clearly stating qualifications, experience, and personal attributes required.
- Application form.

- A link to HBXL's adult safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Self-disclosure form in line with guidance on recruitment of candidates with a criminal record.

4. Application Forms

- All applicants, whether paid, voluntary, full-time, or part-time, must complete a full application form including a detailed employment history.
- All applicants are required to provide:
 - personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number
 - details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
 - full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment
 - qualifications, the awarding body and date of award
 - details of referees/references (see below for further information)
 - a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.
- Application forms must be fully completed; incomplete forms will be rejected.

5. References

- Two written references (not from relatives) are required; references will be obtained from the candidate's most recent employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority.
- References will be taken up only once a provisional offer is made and will be requested via email and confirmed by telephone, to ensure references originate from a legitimate source.
- Candidate-supplied references are not acceptable.
- Referees will be asked specifically about:
 - Suitability for working with adults at risk or young people.
 - Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired, relevant to safeguarding.
 - The reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post.
 - Suitability for the post.
- Any discrepancies will be clarified by telephone or email, and a written record will be kept.
- Overseas references will be sought where UK references are unavailable.

6. Disclosures

- All candidates applying for roles in the HBXL Skills Academy will require a basic DBS check. All roles with significant access to vulnerable adults or young people require an enhanced DBS check.
- Advertisements for roles within the HBXL Skills Academy will state that successful candidates will be subject to DBS checks.
- Applicants must declare all previous convictions in line with relevant legislation. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete, and sign, a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults.

7. Shortlisting

- Short-listing of candidates will be against the person specification for the post and carried out by a minimum of two fully trained staff members.

- Any gaps in employment history, or other inconsistencies or concerns, will require explanations.
- References are requested before interview, ideally from the most recent employer.
- Online searches of shortlisted candidates will be completed as part of HBXL's due diligence and recorded in an Online Search Record, as detailed in Appendix 1. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which may be explored with the applicant at interview.

8. Interview process

- Interviews will be conducted face-to-face by a minimum of two trained staff members.
- Selection methods will be communicated to candidates beforehand, and reasonable adjustments accommodated.
- All candidates will be asked the same questions based on the person specification.
- Interviews will explore:
 - Suitability to work with vulnerable adults/young people.
 - Attitude, motivation, and understanding of safeguarding.
 - Gaps in employment history.
 - Verification of identity.

9. Appointment

- Successful candidates will receive a conditional offer, including terms and conditions, and, if applicable, probation period details.
- Roles requiring DBS checks will also require completion of a criminal record self-disclosure form.
- Appointment is conditional on satisfactory DBS and references. Having a criminal record will be considered in context, and will not automatically prevent employment.
- All staff and volunteers will undergo a formal induction covering safeguarding, child/adult protection policies, and ongoing training requirements.

10. Pre-employment checks

Pre-employment checks will be completed as listed in the Safer Recruitment Checklist in Appendix 2. Checks include:

- Verification of the candidate's identity.
- A basic DBS check will be conducted, where applicable.
- If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, further checks may be considered.
- Verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals.
- Verification of the candidate's qualifications.
- Checks on prohibition from teaching (for education roles) and disqualification by association (where relevant) will be conducted.
- Confirmation of mental and physical fitness for the role.

Copies of documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept on their personnel file.

11. Record Keeping

A record will be kept to demonstrate that the checks detailed above have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed or certificate obtained.

12. Post-Offer & Induction

HBXL will:

- issue a conditional offer pending satisfactory checks.
- provide a safeguarding-focused induction, including whistleblowing procedures.
- monitor new staff during probation and ensure ongoing supervision.

13. Training

Once recruited, all new staff and volunteers will receive training and written guidelines to ensure they remain fully aware of relevant safeguarding procedures.

- All staff and volunteers will receive training and guidelines on safer working practices.
- All staff and volunteers will receive training on allegations management, whistle-blowing, and reporting procedures.
- All staff and volunteers receive training and written guidelines on reporting procedures if they suspect that a child or young person working with the organisation is at risk of harm.
- All staff will attend refresher training on an ongoing basis.

14. Probation period

- All new staff undergo a probation period of three months, extendable to 6–12 months if required.
- The probationary period allows assessment of suitability for the role.

15. Contractors

- Safeguarding requirements will be set out in the contract between HBXL and the contractor.
- HBXL will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the HBXL Skills Academy, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check.

16. Volunteers

HBXL will undertake a written risk assessment and use their professional judgement and experience when deciding what checks, if any, are required.

The risk assessment should consider:

- the nature of the work with vulnerable adults, including the level of supervision
- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability, and
- whether the role is eligible for a DBS check, and if it is, the level of the check.

Details of the risk assessment will be recorded.

17. Monitor and Review

- This policy will be reviewed at least every two years and updated as required.
- The policy will also be reviewed immediately following updates to statutory legislation and guidance, including “Keeping children safe in education 2025”.

Appendix 1: Safer Recruitment Online Search Record

Candidate Name				
Position Applied For				
Date of Online Search				
Search Conducted By				
Role of Person Conducting Search				
Search Approved By				
Search Engine Used (Highlight as appropriate)	Google Bing Other:			
Social Media Platforms Reviewed (Highlight as appropriate)	Facebook X (Twitter) LinkedIn Instagram TikTok Other:			
Keywords / Search Terms Used E.g., "[Full Name]" + "[Town/City]" + "arrest", "inappropriate", "offensive" etc.				
Summary of Findings				
Source/Platform	URL/Description	Content Summary	Relevant to Role or Safeguarding?	Action Required/ (Y/N)

Assessment of Online Presence (Highlight as appropriate)	No concerning content identified. Concerning content identified – see below. Further clarification from candidate required. Referred to Designated Safeguarding Lead.	
Nature of Concerns (if applicable) E.g., discriminatory views, extremist content, criminal behaviour, breach of professional conduct, safeguarding risk		
Recruitment Decision Based on Online Search (Highlight as appropriate)	Proceed with recruitment (no concerns). Proceed with caution – issue discussed with candidate. Offer on hold – further investigation required. Offer withdrawn – safeguarding/HR concerns. Escalated to Safeguarding Lead or Senior Leadership.	
Additional Comments/Notes		
Completed by	Name	Date
Reviewed by	Name	Date

Appendix 2: Safer Recruitment Checklist

Stage	Action Item	Details / Notes	Status	Owner
Pre-Advert	Define job description & person spec	Include safeguarding duties and expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Add safeguarding commitment to advert	E.g. "We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children..."	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Prepare structured application form	Avoid CV-only submissions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Shortlisting	Use scoring matrix for candidate selection	Based on person spec and safeguarding criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Check employment history for gaps. Investigate any unexplained gaps or inconsistencies in CV/application.	Request written explanations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Request references (including most recent employer)	Ask specific safeguarding questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Interview	Panel of at least two trained interviewers	One must be trained in safer recruitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Ask safeguarding scenario-based questions	Tailored to role and setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Record structured notes	Use template for consistency	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pre-Employment Checks	Verify identity (passport, driving licence, birth certificate).	Originals must be seen and copied	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Verify name, date of birth and address	Original documentation must be seen and copied	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Confirm eligibility to work in the UK using official documentation (passport, visa, biometric residence permit or Share code).	Original documentation must be seen and copied	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Basic DBS for roles within the HBXL Skills Academy	Use update service if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Enhanced DBS with barred list check for those with access to vulnerable adults or children	Use update service if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Stage	Action Item	Details / Notes	Status	Owner
	For new hires from overseas, overseas criminal record checks where DBS is unavailable.	Use service if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Check prohibition from teaching/ disqualification for teachers within the HBXL Skills Academy	Via Teacher Services portal	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Review at least two written references; one from the most recent employer. References should specifically address safeguarding and suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.	Contact referees directly; do not accept testimonials provided by the candidate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Verify any qualifications claimed that are required for the role.	Request copies of certifications	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Check professional body registration where applicable.	Request registration of body number	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Optional, but may be necessary to confirm fitness for role and compliance with occupational health requirements.	Use health declaration form	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Post-Offer	Issue conditional offer letter	Subject to satisfactory checks	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Provide safeguarding-focused induction	Include whistleblowing, code of conduct, reporting lines	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Monitor during probation	Include supervision and feedback checkpoints	<input type="checkbox"/>	