



Hawthorn
Learning

Safer recruitment policy

Date created: December 2023

Revision date: Annually

Last reviewed: September 2025

Author: Tomlin Wilding

Contents

1. Purpose of the policy

- 1.1 Rationale
- 1.2 Aims and objectives

2. Safer recruitment roles

- 2.1 Board of directors
- 2.2 Director of human needs
- 2.3 Executive assistant
- 2.4 Interview panels

3. Advertising

- 3.1 Safeguarding statement
- 3.2 Job adverts
- 3.3 Role profiles
- 3.4 Person specifications

4. Selection process

- 4.1 Visits
- 4.2 Application
- 4.3 Shortlisting
- 4.3 In-person assessment
- 4.4 Notification

5. Pre-employment checking

- 5.1 Disclosure and Barring Service checks
- 5.2 Health and support
- 5.3 References
- 5.4 Identity and right to work
- 5.5 Qualifications and registrations

6. Induction

- 6.1 Statement of particulars
- 6.2 Handbook and policies
- 6.3 Induction programme

7. Policy administration

- 7.1 Monitoring and Review

7.2 Record keeping

7.3 Related policies, procedures and documents

1. Purpose of the policy

1.1 Rationale

Hawthorn Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students in its care. As an employer, the school expects all team members, including volunteers to share this commitment.

In line with the Children's Act 2004, Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education Guidance DfES/04217/2006 and the safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 Hawthorn Learning takes very seriously its duty of care for all students. In order to help safeguard and promote the welfare of all its students we are committed to a thorough and consistent Safer Recruitment Policy. This should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks Policy.

Safer practice in recruitment requires people to consider a range of issues to do with child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child at every stage of the process.

These procedures apply to anyone working for Hawthorn Learning, whether in a full or part-time, paid or voluntary capacity.

To ensure safe and appropriate appointments are made, it is essential to ensure a consistent and thorough process of obtaining information, collating, analysing and evaluating from all the applicants.

1.2 Aims and objectives

The aim of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people which might abuse students or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing excellent team members.

The policy objectives are to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about the applicants applying for our vacant positions.

2. Safer recruitment roles

2.1 Board of directors

All appointments will be checked and confirmed by the full Hawthorn Learning board of directors, verifying that all checks have been undertaken and they are satisfied that recruitment has been fair and safe.

2.2 Director of Human needs

The Director of Human needs is ultimately responsible for:

- Ensuring Hawthorn Learning has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all team members in accordance with safer recruitment and any other legal requirements.
- Monitoring the compliance of this policy
- Overseeing the whole recruitment process for every appointment, ensuring that we operate safe recruitment procedures
- Ensuring that all appropriate checks are carried out on all team members, including volunteers
- Promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the procedure.

2.3 Executive assistant

The executive assistant will be responsible for undertaking most of the administrative tasks in relation to recruitment, including but not limited to:

- Assisting the Human Needs Director with recruitment advertising activities
- Receiving applications
- Undertaking stage 1- shortlisting of applications
- Recording the progress of all applications through the recruitment process
- Sending rejection emails and invites to in-person assessment

- Attending interviews as a note taker
- Sending a conditional offer of employment to the successful candidate
- Administering all pre-employment checks
- Sending all induction information to new starters.

Where the executive assistant is unavailable for any reason, the Human Needs Director will take responsibility for these activities. The executive assistant may choose to delegate aspects of these activities to the administrative assistant where appropriate to do so and with suitable supervision.

2.4 Interview panels

The interview panel will consist of at least two people, one of which will be a managing director, and will have the authority to make decisions in regard to appointments.

Interview panels will:

- Agree the majority of questions for the formal interview in advance
- Ensure all questions are in line with the law and the equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- Ensure notes are taken during the interview and these are kept
- Include at least one panelist who has undertaken safer recruitment training
- Agree a fair scoring / decision making procedure prior to the interview
- Make decisions regarding recruitment in the best interests of the children.

3. Advertising

3.1 Safeguarding statement

The following statement will be included in all advertising for positions at Hawthorn Learning:

"Hawthorn Learning is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all team members to share this commitment. The successful candidate will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check with List Checks Disclosure along with other relevant employment checks."

3.2 Job adverts

Vacant job positions will be advertised on the Hawthorn Learning website, and placed on appropriate social media sites such as, but not limited to, LinkedIn and Facebook. Adverts may be placed in educational publications and/or with recruitment agencies where this is deemed appropriate and necessary.

All job adverts will contain:

- The safeguarding statement
- The closing date for applications
- A clear and concise description of the recruitment process
- An attached role profile and person specification
- Links to information about Hawthorn Learning and our policies.

3.3 Role profiles

A role profile is a document that states in clear detail what the role being advertised includes. In particular all role profiles will outline:

- Whether the role is permanent or fixed term (and if so for what period)
- Whether the role is full or part time (and if so what timetable is expected)
- The salary for the role
- The expected or desired start date for the role

- The main duties and activities of the role
- A RACI matrix showing the areas in which the role is responsible, accountable, consulted and informed.
- Information on the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children.

3.4 Person specifications

A person specification is the document that states in clear detail those attributes that are "required" and "desirable" to undertake this role. In particular person specifications will outline the following types of attribute, either as required or desirable:

- Qualifications
- Certifications and training
- Registrations of professional bodies
- Skills and competencies
- Experience and knowledge
- Personality traits
- Values and principles

All roles will require the candidate to undergo and pass the pre-employment checks as outlined in this policy. This will be stated clearly in the person specification.

4. Selection process

The selection of the right candidate for a role is taken very seriously and will be a rigorous process to ensure the best possible outcome for the organisation, and most importantly, for the children.

4.1 Visits

At any time during the application process, we encourage anyone considering candidacy to contact us to arrange an informal visit.

4.2 Application

All candidates will be required to complete a standard Hawthorn Learning application form and will have the opportunity to supply their personal CV to accompany the form. In addition to supplying helpful information for how the candidate will fulfil the role and meet the person specification, the application form will require the candidate to provide:

- Their full legal name and pronouns
- Any previous names
- Their address and previous addresses for 3 years
- Their National Insurance number
- Sufficient details to allow us to receive two references
- A statement of any criminal convictions

4.3 Shortlisting

Stage 1: The executive assistant or a director will scrutinise all applications to ensure they have been fully completed and signed and are therefore eligible for shortlisting. Any applications that are not fully completed, do not contain essential information, or are not signed will not be considered.

Stage 2: Initial shortlisting of all eligible applications will be undertaken by one or more of the directors or a recruitment-trained member of the team, comparing the details given in the application form to the person specification. All applications that do not meet the “required” criteria in the person specification will be eliminated as candidates.

Stage 3: Full shortlisting involves at least two directors meeting to discuss the remaining candidates and making clear, conscious and fair decisions regarding the candidates they would like to invite for in-person assessment. The role profile, person specification, application form and our values and guiding principles will fully inform this process.

Important notes on shortlisting

- All decisions will be made in line with our equality, diversity and inclusion policy and will be free from discrimination.
- Comprehensive notes will be recorded and kept for the legally specified period regarding both successful and unsuccessful candidates.
- We will not always be able to provide feedback for unsuccessful candidates who are rejected at this stage of recruitment.
- For all candidates that are invited to in-person assessment, applications will be scrutinised to create questions for clarification at interview.

4.3 In-person assessment

At Hawthorn Learning, in-person assessment will always involve at least a formal interview, but will often involve other selection activities. These will usually, but not always, happen in one visit. In-person assessment is likely to involve being available for a half-day or full day in which the candidate may be asked to perform specific tasks, facilitate a group (if appropriate), take a tour, chat with other team members, and attend a more formal interview. Candidates will always receive clear and comprehensive information about what their assessment will entail when invited to attend, including:

- Date, time and duration of the assessment in total
- The nature of any tasks they will be asked to undertake
- Details of tours and times for meeting team members
- The title / nature of any facilitation or presentation required
- The time and duration of the formal interview.

Tasks

Tasks used to aid our selection process will be created in line with the specific role. They will be designed to help candidates display appropriate competencies, skills, and/or their values and temperament.

Chats and tours

During the in-person assessment day, it is likely that time will be scheduled for candidates to receive a tour by one of our team members or a number of students where appropriate, and there may be opportunities to have informal chats with both team members and students.

Facilitation / presentation

During the in-person assessment day, candidates may be asked to facilitate group learning, take part in a group discussion with potential colleagues, or present on a prepared topic.

Formal interview

The formal interview will involve a series of standard questions that are asked of each candidate, followed by asking more bespoke questions for each individual candidate. Standard questions may be open questions that provide the opportunity for the candidate to express their suitability, or they may relate to aspects of performing the role or our values. Individual questions will relate to the candidate's application, skills, and experience. This is designed to be a robust and humane process in which:

- The leadership team can ask standard questions to determine the best candidate for the role and organisation
- The leadership team can ask responsive, bespoke questions of each candidate to clarify their history and any other aspects of their suitability, including ensuring there are no safety concerns
- The candidate can speak openly and directly to the leadership team about why they want to join the organisation in this role
- The candidate can ask any questions of the leadership team about the organisation and the role
- The leadership team can assess the candidate's ability to support Hawthorn Learning's approach for the promotion and safeguarding of children's welfare.

The interview panel

The panel will be decided in advance of the interview, and brief details of the panel members will be communicated to the candidates. The panel will meet before the formal interview to discuss the candidates' applications and agree both standard questions that will be asked of every candidate, and bespoke questions for each individual candidate that clarify and support their application.

The interview panel are collectively responsible for ensuring notes of the pre-meeting and the interview are recorded and kept on file, and for ensuring all candidates who are interviewed are contacted with appropriate feedback after the assessment.

4.4 Notification

Candidates will be notified of the result of their in-person assessment as soon as possible after all candidates have been assessed. They will always be informed about when they will be notified on the day of their interview. The successful candidate will usually be contacted first and will be offered the position conditionally and verbally.

Once the successful candidate has accepted the offer verbally, the pre-employment checking procedure will be initiated in writing with a written, conditional offer of employment. Unsuccessful candidates will then be contacted by telephone (or email if they prefer) with the result as soon as possible. They will then receive written feedback within two weeks.

Offers of employment will always be conditional on:

- The receipt of two satisfactory references
- An acceptable DBS check, including Lists Check Disclosure (and Prohibition Orders check if required) and an overseas check where a candidate has lived abroad.
- Verification of qualifications and registrations declared during the application process
- Verification of identification and right to work in the UK
- An accepted pre-employment medical questionnaire.

5. Pre-employment checking

All candidates must complete all the pre-employment checks before starting work at Hawthorn Learning.

5.1 Disclosure and Barring Service checks

All team members, including both paid employees and unpaid volunteers must have an accepted DBS check prior to working at Hawthorn Learning. This is recorded on our Single Central Record. For all other information about DBS checking at Hawthorn Learning, please refer to the DBS policy.

5.2 Health and support

At this stage we will ask the candidate to complete a brief questionnaire in regard to their health and any medical or other support needs they may have. Our intention is to be as inclusive as possible, offering adjustments and support wherever possible to allow the successful candidate to perform their role optimally.

Only in very rare circumstances will this health discussion result in a conditional offer of employment being reconsidered. This would only happen where a person's medical condition was so incompatible with the role or environment that we are unable to make reasonable adjustments or support them.

5.3 References

We require a minimum of two satisfactory references confirming previous employment to be received prior to the commencement of employment. Character references may be obtained in exceptional circumstances where previous employment is limited. The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information in regard to previous employment.

Referees must:

- Be contacted directly by Hawthorn learning for their reference
- Not be related to the candidate
- Receive the role profile and person specification with the reference request
- Sign their reference declaration.

5.4 Identity and right to work

All candidates must prove their identity and right to work in the UK by providing the appropriate official documents. We must see the original documents which will be checked, and photocopies will be taken by us and kept in the employee file.

5.5 Qualifications and registrations

All candidates will be required to provide certificates or registration numbers for online checking where applicable for any qualifications or registrations that are “required” for their role. We must see the original documents which will be checked, and photocopies will be taken by us and kept in the employee file.

6. Induction

6.1 *Statement of particulars*

Once all five pre-employment checks are completed, an unconditional offer of employment will be made in writing and a start date will be formally agreed. Hawthorn Learning will then issue a Statement of Particulars (the legal name for a contract of employment) with the Hawthorn Learning team handbook.

The statement of particulars will include:

- Our name as the employer “Hawthorn Learning CIC”
- The employee's name
- Place of work
- Hours and days of work
- Start date
- Salary
- End date where this is applicable (fixed-term contracts)
- Notice period
- Details of where to find the information about all employment details, including:
 - Term time and holiday breaks
 - Other paid and unpaid leave
 - Benefits
 - Training and development
 - Absence reporting.

6.2 *Handbook and policies*

Our team member handbook is issued prior to any team member starting work at Hawthorn Learning. This contains:

- The full terms of employment
- Pay and payroll information

- Absence reporting procedures
- Leave procedures
- Remote work information
- Conduct information.

The team handbook offers information in conjunction with our employment policies, which are available on our website. We have five employment policies that cover all areas of employment at Hawthorn Learning, as follows:

<u>Policy</u>	<u>Includes</u>
Wellbeing	Working arrangements, holiday, special and medical leave, health and safety at work, supporting and managing ill health, illness, promoting health and wellbeing.
Dignity	Grievance, capability, disciplinary, bullying, whistleblowing, equality and diversity.
Family	Maternity, paternity, adoption, parents and carers, building alternative families.
Development	Compulsory training, collective learning and development, personal mastery, continuous professional development.
Involvement	Decision-making, leadership, culture, communication, remuneration.

6.3 Induction programme

All new team members will take part in a facilitated and supportive induction programme to ensure they transition into Hawthorn Learning comfortably. Our induction programme ensures our culture of putting children's safeguarding, protection and welfare at the forefront is upheld at all times.

Initial standard training

All new team members will receive training in the following areas as part of their induction process:

- Safeguarding
- Health and Safety
- First aid

- Hawthorn Learning values and guiding principles
- The whole human approach
- The whole human curriculum
- Supporting regulation and rumbling.

7. Policy administration

7.1 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored by the Human Needs Director and the board of directors.

7.2 Record keeping

All recruitment records will be kept in line with legislation.

7.3 Related policies, procedures and documents

- All our employment policies
- Complaints procedure
- Disclose and Barring Service policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Information Management policy
- Safeguarding & Child protection policy.