Safer Recruitment Policy

APRIL WELL LIMITED — Company No. 11924473

Registered office: Unit 39c St Olavs Court Business Center, Lower Road, London, England, SE16 2XB

Director / Legal Representative: Xiaoying Chi

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Xiaoying Chi

(Deputy DSL: n/a – temporarily covered by the DSL)

24/7 emergency: 07930416543

Email: info@aprilwell.co.uk

This policy is publicly available. It may be shared with parents, agents, partner schools and inspectors on request.

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Policy Statement

April Well Limited is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at all times while they are under our care.

April Well Limited adheres to the principles of the statutory 'Safer Recruitment' guidance for schools, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) 'Safer Recruitment' advice.

April Well Limited follows the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS) guidelines as part of an on-going accreditation process. The purpose of this policy is to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, or who are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

April Well Limited does not provide routine or long-term homestay accommodation. However, where April Well Limited uses or approves any homestay, emergency accommodation adult, approved accommodation arrangement, transfer provider or other third party contractor in connection with student welfare or emergency support, April Well Limited will apply safer recruitment, vetting and suitability checks appropriate to the role and level of contact with students. April Well Limited is aware of additional sources of advice and guidance relating to accommodation and welfare arrangements, including the British Council Homestay guidelines and Codes of Practice and the Department for Education Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards.

This policy is supported by the most recent version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026' part three. April Well Limited has a rigorous process for recruiting staff in accordance with the principles of Safer Recruitment. This is from point of advertisement to post-induction, with ongoing monitoring and safeguarding reviews.

The 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, April Well Limited commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is highlighted.

Aims of the policy

The aims of the policy are:

• To ensure that April Well Limited meets 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 best possible members of staff are recruited on their abilities 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 will 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 a role

April Well Limited plan the recruitment exercise to ensure that the recruitment panel are clear about the qualities, qualifications and experience needed by the successful candidate and whether there are any particular matters that need to be mentioned in the advertisement for the post. This is in order to prevent unwanted applications or ultimately an unsuitable appointment.

The job and person specification for each role form part of the pack sent to prospective candidates and set out the extent that the role involves working with children and young people, and the safeguarding responsibility involved.

Advertisements for roles make April Well Limited commitment to safeguarding clear by including the following statement: "April Well Limited is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment". There should also be reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the job description.

April Well Limited advertisements also include the requirement for applicants to complete the appropriate level of Disclosure and Barring Service check for the role, including an enhanced DBS check and children's barred list check where the role involves regulated activity with children.

April Well Limited do not accept curriculum vitae (CV) drawn up by the applicant without an accompanying application form being submitted. This is because a CV presents only the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details. The application form details the safeguarding mission statement, the requirement for an applicant to have the appropriate level of DBS check for the role and for references to be sought prior to interview where possible. Completed application forms and accompanying CV's are stored securely on a confidential computer drive *by the Director (who also acts as DSL).The Director maintains the bank of* job adverts securely and confidentially. The details are circulated via online advertising organisations which require applicants to submit expressions of interest together with their CV to the company.

The Application Form

On receipt of expressions of interest and accompanying CVs, the DSL will screen initial submissions, and the application form will be sent to applicants who have the potential to meet the requirements of the job specification and person specification.

Through the application form, April Well Limited obtains the following information:

- 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 referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer. Two satisfactory written references are required. At least one referee must have known the applicant for at least two years; for a first job, at least one reference must be from a professional person. N.B. Where an applicant who is not currently working with children has done so in the past it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed with regard to their work with children. The form makes it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends, and that references may be sought from previous employers on short listed candidates for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview; and
- 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.

Where a role involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children April Well Limited will make applicants aware on the application form that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

There will be a self-disclosure process introduced for short listed candidates to ensure the applicant has an opportunity to raise all information in a confidential way. Only shortlisted applicants will be asked to provide any information about criminal records legally disclosable for the role, including spent records only where legally permitted and not protected by filtering rules. For regulated activity roles, shortlisted applicants must declare whether they are barred from that activity. Applicants will be asked to declare relevant regulatory or professional sanctions where lawful, and to disclose any convictions, cautions or other records only where legally disclosable for the role. Any disclosures can be discussed with them prior to or at interview (pending receipt of the completed enhanced DBS check). Protected convictions and cautions must not be requested or taken into account.

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, including any in which the penalty is time-expired (that is where a warning could no longer be taken into account in any new disciplinary hearing for example) and whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns and, if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. If the applicant

is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues.

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 Job Description and Person Specification

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

The job description will state the main duties and responsibilities of the post; and the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children s/he is responsible for or comes into contact with. The extent of this responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post being advertised.

The Person Specification

The Person Specification is supplementary information to the job description and lists essential and desirable criteria for the post, including experience, competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate. The Person Specification will explain how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process. This document will be reviewed by the DSL to ensure compliance with the Safer Recruitment guidance.

The Person Specification will explain that the interview will explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:

- motivation to work with children;
- ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children;
- emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours; and
- explain that if the applicant is short-listed any relevant issues arising from his/her references will be taken up at interview.

The Application Information Pack

In addition to the application form, an information pack is sent to applicants. The pack will contain:

- The application form
- The job description and person specification
- Requirement to complete the appropriate role-eligible DBS check
- April Well Limited will seek references and may approach previous employers for information and verification of experience or qualifications
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy statement
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post
- Information about the applicant's current employer being contacted and asked about any disciplinary offences or relevant information relating to children, where the applicant is currently working with children on a paid or voluntary basis (including expired offences).

Scrutinising and shortlisting applications

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.

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.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records; further information can be found on GOV.UK. April Well Limited will ask staff to complete a self-declaration on an annual basis thereafter to ensure that the information remains up to date. Should the circumstances of any member of staff change in the meantime, it is their responsibility to inform the guardianship organisation immediately. Signed self-declarations are required from all staff, volunteers and, where applicable, homestay carers; household declarations follow AEGIS Standard 5.1.2.

All shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches will be undertaken.

A copy of the interview form is kept on the personnel file.

Online Search

April Well Limited will carry out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with the applicant at interview. All shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches will be undertaken.

References

April Well Limited seek references for 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. References will always be obtained in writing.

Referees are asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children, to outline any concerns about the applicant working with children or any disciplinary details. Requests must exclude allegations found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious. Relevant substantiated safeguarding concerns meeting the harm threshold must be included; low-level concerns are included only where they meet the KCSIE reference criteria, such as related misconduct or poor performance.

'To whom it may concern' references are not accepted by April Well Limited to reduce the risk of making an appointment decision on a forged reference.

Where (due to operational need) a reference is secured over the telephone in the first instance a record must be made of the telephone reference. Following this initial record, the reference will be obtained in writing as soon as practicable to provide a record of the information obtained from the referee.

Where electronic references are received, April Well Limited will ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

Once the references have been received, April Well Limited will verify the source of the reference. If concerns are raised within the reference, April Well Limited will address these by telephoning the referee, providing an opportunity for April Well Limited to ask any further questions where required. A log of the call will be placed on file. The references will be retained on file for the duration of contract/employment and then an agreed period afterward, normally 5 -7 years.

April Well Limited is required to check that information provided in references is not contradictory or incomplete. On receipt, references will be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee will be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example if the answers are vague or if insufficient information is provided. They will also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the candidate.

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

Invitation to interview

In addition to the arrangements for interviews – time and place, directions to the venue, membership of the interview panel – the invitation will remind 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 will also stress 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 will be instructed to bring with them

documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy the requirements when applying for an enhanced DBS using the current DBS identity-checking route and required document combination, including evidence of any name changes. In addition, where the candidate needs permission to work in the UK, they must produce this documentation at the interview for checking and verification.

Candidates will also be 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 will be obtained from the awarding body.

A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept for the personnel file.

Wherever possible, April Well Limited 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.

Interviews

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 have received Safer Recruitment training from a recognised provider.

Two interviewers allow for one interviewer to observe and assess the candidate while the other interviewer makes notes using the pre-planned competency-based question set. This reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview.

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 will include:

- the candidate's attitude toward children;

- their ability to support the organisation's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;

- gaps in the candidate's employment history;

- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a reference; and

- the panel will also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an enhanced DBS check.

The panel will record the interview on the April Well Limited Interview Form.

If, for whatever reason, references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate will also be asked at interview if there is anything they wish to declare or discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to their referees. It is vital that the references are obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed and before they start work.

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. If the candidate is not able to produce the certificates, written confirmation of his or her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

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 will be checked, signed and dated by the verifier. Confirmation that these documents have been inspected will be recorded on the single central record (SCR). Permission to retain an identity-document copy will be sought in line with AEGIS Standard 2.8.10. Personnel files must contain the Appendix 14 records, including induction training, and check dates on the SCR must match the supporting documents.

A copy of the interview form is kept on the personnel file.

Conditional Offer of Appointment

The appointment of the successful candidate will be conditional upon the receipt of at least two satisfactory references (for further details see information above), proof of identification, proof of right to work in the UK, the appropriate role-eligible DBS check (including the children's barred list for regulated activity), verification of qualifications where they are a requirement of the post and the completion of any probationary period.

April Well Limited 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 DSL will report suspected criminal conduct to the police as appropriate and refer to the DBS where the legal referral conditions are met.

Further details on Pre-Appointment Vetting Checks April Well Limited undertakes

All offers of appointment are conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks. These recruitment procedures also apply to volunteers and any homestay appointed by April Well Limited, with checks appropriate to the role. April Well Limited will:

• verify a candidate's identity, it is important to be sure that the person is who they claim to be, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking

the name on their birth certificate, where this is available. Further identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website.

• obtain the role-eligible DBS check, including an enhanced check and children's barred list check for regulated activity with children. Written permission must be obtained before checks. April Well Limited conducts its own check unless the certificate holder is subscribed to the DBS Update Service; in that case, view the original certificate, confirm its suitability for the role and carry out and record an online status check with written permission. Original physical certificates must be seen by the guardianship organisation before a candidate commences work. A record of the date the certificate was checked, its issue date, type and number will be retained and recorded on the single central record of appointments. Copies of DBS certificates and records of criminal information disclosed by the candidate are covered by UK GDPR Article 10 and the Data Protection Act 2018. April Well Limited complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018. We will only retain a copy of a DBS, where there is a valid reason for doing so and it will not be kept for longer than six months. All staff and volunteers require the certificate appropriate to their role before starting. Where a homestay is used, enhanced checks cover all resident household members aged 16 or over, including those temporarily away if present during a student stay, and regular overnight visitors (AEGIS 5.1.3).

• verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. *Health/fitness questions are normally asked after a conditional offer; any earlier question must fall within a permitted Equality Act 2010 section 60 exception. Assess role requirements with reasonable adjustments.*

• verify that any member of staff acting as an educational guardian holds British citizenship or settled status.

• April Well Limited will check whether the member of staff acting as an educational guardian:

- has been convicted of a criminal offence in the UK or overseas for which they have received a custodial or suspended sentence of 12 months or more
- is a persistent offender who shows a particular disregard for the law
- has committed a criminal offence, or offences, which caused serious harm

If any of these apply, April Well Limited will be unable to appoint the member of staff.

April Well Limited will consider refusing the appointment of an educational guardian where the individual:

- has been convicted of a criminal offence in the UK or overseas for which they have received a custodial or suspended sentence of less than 12 months
- has been convicted of a criminal offence in the UK or overseas for which they have received a non-custodial sentence or received an out-of-court disposal that is recorded on their criminal record. Where the UKVI Child Student rules apply, the relevant criminality checks also cover any adult regularly living with the nominated guardian; these are distinct from ordinary recruitment decisions.

• verify the person's right to work in the UK, including EU nationals. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, April Well Limited will follow the advice on the GOV.UK website.

• where a staff member, volunteer or applicable homestay member has lived or worked abroad for more than three months in the last five years, obtain a police check from the relevant country. If the country cannot provide a check, document additional checks, such as an additional reference, and a risk assessment (AEGIS 2.8.9);

• verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.

• ask short listed candidates to complete a self-declaration. Only shortlisted applicants will be asked to provide any information about criminal records legally disclosable for the role, subject to the filtering safeguards above. Any conviction that may lawfully be considered requires a documented suitability risk assessment; statutory bars and applicable UKVI restrictions cannot be overridden by that assessment (AEGIS 2.8.8).

Post Appointment: Induction

Newly appointed staff members 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 agreement to abide by the Staff Code of Conduct and provides opportunities for new staff members to discuss any issues or concerns through 1:1 meetings with their line manager.

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, safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, behaviour policy (which should include measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), the Staff Code of Conduct, how to report concerns, the Low-Level Concerns Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy and with whom they should discuss any concerns about their role or responsibilities. The induction programme will contain child protection training. All staff will be asked to read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Part One in full. Staff working directly with children must also read the relevant safeguarding information in Annex A. Basic safeguarding training must be completed before starting the role, with renewal and updates under our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The line manager of the newly appointed staff member will report any concerns or issues about a person's ability or suitability for the role at the outset and address these immediately.

Maintaining a safer culture

April Well Limited recognises the need for continued awareness of safeguarding issues. Staff receive appropriate training and induction to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out. Staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL. Staff, parents, students and partners are encouraged to report any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children, and that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

April Well Limited does not provide routine or long-term homestay accommodation. However, where April Well Limited uses or approves any homestay, emergency accommodation adult, approved accommodation arrangement, transfer provider or other third party contractor in connection with student welfare or emergency support, April Well Limited will ensure that appropriate safer recruitment, vetting, suitability and safeguarding checks are completed before the person or provider is used, according to the role, setting and level of contact with students.

Monitoring and Review

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 23/10/2026

Signed: 

Name: Xiaoying Chi

Role: Director and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Date: 23/10/2026