

Safer Recruitment Policy



Review Date: August 2022

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

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, sessional workers, students or anyone else working on behalf of Willow Banks Forest School.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to protect children and young people who receive services from Willow banks Forest school including the children of adults who use our services.
- to embed safer recruitment practices and procedures in the forest school, reinforcing the safeguarding and well being of the children and young people in our care.

Willow Banks Forest School believes that a child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to keep them safe.

We are committed to practice in a way that keeps them safe.

This policy reinforces the expected conduct outlined in the Code of Conduct for staff, all staff are expected to be familiar with. All successful candidates for paid or volunteer employment will be made aware of all relevant policies and documents.

1. Our Policy

This policy is an essential element in creating and maintaining that safe and supportive environment for the young people, staff and others within the community. It also aims to ensure safe, consistent and fair recruitment and selection of all staff and volunteers by:

- attracting the best possible candidates/volunteers to vacancies
- deterring prospective candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable from applying for vacancies
- identifying and rejecting those candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable to work with children and young people

Forest school is committed to using procedures that deal effectively with those adults who fail to comply with our safeguarding and child protection procedures and practices.

As an employer we are under a duty to refer any allegation of abuse against a member of staff to the Designated Officer for the local authority (LADO) within one working day of the allegation being made. A referral will be made if a teacher or member of staff (including volunteers) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

As an employer we are under a duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), any member of staff who, following disciplinary investigation, is dismissed or resigns because of misconduct towards a child/young person and we may refer any concerns we have before the completion of this process.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The manager of the forest school will:

- ensure the forest school has effective policies and procedures in place for the safe and fair recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers in accordance with Department for Education Guidance and Legal Requirements
- monitor the forest schools compliance with them and revise the document annually

The forest school manager will:

- ensure that the forest school operates safe and fair recruitment and selection procedures which are reviewed annually and up-dated to reflect any changes to legislation and statutory guidance.
- ensure that all appropriate checks have been carried out on staff and volunteers in the school
- monitor any contractors and agencies compliance with this document
- promote the safety and well-being of children and young people at every stage of this process

3. Inviting Applications and Defining the role

For any role working with children and young people both the role description and the person specification should highlight the safeguarding responsibilities. All advertisements for posts of regulated activity, paid or unpaid, will include the following statement;

Willow Banks Forest School is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post holders in regulated activity are subject to appropriate vetting procedures and a satisfactory “Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced check”.

We will advertise all vacancies to attract a wide selection of applicants, whether the role is for paid staff or volunteers.

All applicants will receive a pack containing the following when applying for a post:

- Job description and person specification
- The forest school’s Safeguarding and child protection Policy
- The forest school’s Safer Recruitment Policy

The selection procedure for the post

- A standard application form
- Copy of the forest school’s Code of Conduct
- An overview of our safer recruitment process
- Self disclosure form
- Reference form and information sheets

Prospective applicants must complete, in full, and return a signed application form.

Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for the completed forms has not passed.

Candidates submitting an application form completed on line will be asked to sign the form when they attend the interview

A curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of a completed application form.

A self disclosure form gives candidates the opportunity to tell us confidentially about any relevant criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary sanctions they have on their record.

Applicants should bring the self disclosure form in the sealed confidential envelope provided to the interview. The information will be reviewed by the panel as part of the vetting checks.

4. Identification of the Recruitment Panel

A minimum of two people should be on the interview panel, one person will be assigned as the chair. At least one member of the selection and recruitment panel must have Safer Recruitment training and will be employed by the forest school. At least one member of the panel must be the company owner.

5. Shortlisting and References

Candidates will be short listed against the person specification for the post.

We will ask the applicant to supply a minimum of two references, one of which must be from the applicant's current/most recent employer where possible. We will check references during the vetting checks so that any discrepancies may be probed during this stage of the procedure (note references should come from the head of the previous organisation, not a colleague). Referees will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will be kept of such exchanges.. Where possible references will be requested in advance of the interview.

Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted in order to clarify any such anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records will again be kept of such exchanges.

Referees will be asked specific questions about the following:

- The candidate's suitability to work with children and young people
- Any substantiated allegations
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, relating to the Safeguarding of children and young people

Reference requests will include the following:

- Applicants current post and salary
- Attendance record
- Disciplinary record

All appointments are subject to satisfactory references, vetting procedures and DBS clearance.

6. Invitation to Invitation

Candidates called to interview will receive:

- A letter confirming the interview and any other selection techniques
- Details of the interview day including details of the panel members
- Further copy of the person specification
- Details of any tasks to be undertaken as part of the interview process
- The opportunity to discuss the process prior to the interview
- Be asked to provide proof of identity

All candidates will be asked in advance whether they have any access requirements for the interview venue. We will also give an outline of the selection methods we will be using and ask if they need special arrangements for these.

7. The Selection Process

Shortlisting candidates should be carried out by at least two people. Both people should be clear about what their role involves. They should assess each application form according to how well it meets the criteria set out in the person specification.

Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the post but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates.

Interviews will always be face-to-face and may include additional interview techniques such as an observation or exercises.

Candidates will be required to:

- Explain any gaps in employment
- Explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to the panel
- Declare any information that is likely to appear on the DBS disclosure
- Demonstrate their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people and their ability and willingness to promote fundamental British values

8. Employment Checks

An offer of appointment will be conditional. It will be made clear to all candidates that the offer is still subject to satisfactory completion of all the vetting procedures needed to be undertaken. All successful candidates will be required to:

- Provide proof of identity
- Complete an enhanced DBS application and receive satisfactory clearance
- Provide proof of professional status
- Provide actual certificates of qualifications
- Complete a confidential health questionnaire
- Provide proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK
- Overseas police check for any individual who within the last five years has lived or worked outside the United Kingdom, whether they are a British citizen or not

All checks will be:

- Confirmed in writing
- Documented and retained on the personnel file
- Recorded on the forest school's Single Central Record
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or if there are any discrepancies in the information received.

Employment will commence subject to all checks and procedures being satisfactorily completed.

9. Induction

All staff and volunteers who are new to the forest school will receive information on our safeguarding policy and procedures and guidance on safe working practices which would include guidance on acceptable conduct/behaviour. These expectations will form part of new staff members' induction training.

All successful candidates will undergo a period of induction and will:

- Meet regularly with their line manager
- Read, sign to showing understanding of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE 2021) Part 1
- Attend mandatory child protection training

10. Supply Staff

Willow Banks Forest School will only use those agencies which operate a Safer Recruitment Policy and supply written confirmation that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed. Any information disclosed as part of the DBS check will be treated confidentially. These agencies should be able to demonstrate that their staff have received appropriate safeguarding training.

Willow Banks Forest School will carry out identity checks when the individual arrives at forest school.

11. Peripatetic Staff

Willow Banks Forest School will require that all necessary checks and DBS requirements have been satisfactorily completed for peripatetic staff.