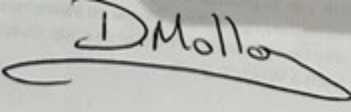





# First **Star** Scholars **UK**

## Safer Recruitment Policy

<b>Date of Last Review</b>	<b>07/10/2024</b>
<b>Review Cycle</b>	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Date (Month/Year) of Next Review</b>	<b>10/2025</b>
<b>Date Policy was Ratified</b>	<b>07/10/2024</b>
<b>Named Lead for Writing/Review</b>	<b>Emily Hollis MBE</b>
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>CEO</b> 	<b>07/10/2024</b>
<b>FSSUK Board of Trustees – Chair</b> 	

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to make sure that First Star Scholars UK (the charity) recruit suitable people. We will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff and volunteers have received appropriate safer recruitment training. We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of everyone that engages with our services. As a charity that works with young people, schools, virtual schools and universities, our approach to safer recruitment reflects that expected of a school.

## Advertising

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

- Our commitment to safeguarding
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken
- The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children or vulnerable adults
- Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2023. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account
- That it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated activity)
- Our safeguarding and safer recruitment policies
- Ensure all candidates use the charity application form (Appendix 1). We will not accept CVs

## Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least two people and will:

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- Explore all potential concerns
- Social media search

We will carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches may be carried out as part of the recruitment process.

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children / vulnerable adults, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we will ask for includes:

- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the barred list
- Whether they are prohibited from teaching (if applicable)
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
- Any relevant overseas information
- Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

## **Employment History Checks and Seeking References**

We will obtain references prior to interview (unless permission to do so has not been given). Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at interview.

When seeking references we will:

- Not accept open references
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees
- Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

## **Interview and selection**

When interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made using scoring matrix
- Ask for evidence of relevant qualifications
- Ensure at least one interviewer has up to date safer recruitment training

## **Pre-appointment vetting checks**

We will record all information on the checks carried. Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

## New staff

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the charity DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to teach
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
  - For all staff, including teaching positions: criminal records checks for overseas applicants
  - For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach

## Regulated Activity

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

## Existing Staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct
- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009
- We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm)
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

### **Agency and Third-Party Staff**

We will obtain written notification from any agency or other third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

### **Contractors**

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the charity has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors. We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months. Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances. We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival.

### **Volunteers**

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Obtain two references, one being the most recent employer

- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

## **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders**

As a charity using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, the charity complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

The charity will not unfairly discriminate against any candidate for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. The charity makes appointment decisions on the basis of merit and ability. If an individual has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him/her from employment within the charity. Instead, each case will be decided on its merits in accordance with the objective assessment criteria set out below.

All candidates should be aware that provision of false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if they have been appointed, and a possible referral to the police and/or DBS.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful for the charity to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who are considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it will also be unlawful for the charity to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the charity to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare as set out in the statutory guidance [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#).

It is a criminal offence for any person who is disqualified from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within the charity. The charity will report the matter to the Police and/or the DBS if:

- the charity receives an application from a disqualified person
- is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application
- the charity has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children

If the failure to disclose is discovered after employment has started, it may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.

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 DBS check, the charity will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question

- whether the conviction or caution is 'protected' as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) (England and Wales) Order 2023 (if yes, it will not be taken into account)
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters
- in the case of disqualification from providing childcare, whether the applicant has or is able to obtain an Ofsted waiver from disqualification
- the circumstances surrounding the offence, and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the charity's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, serious class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the charity's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the charity's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving.

### Version Control - Approval and Review

Version No.	Approved by	Approval Date	Main Change	Review Period
1.0	Diarmuid Molloy	7 October 2024	New policy format approved	Annually