Safer Recruitment Policy

Written by	Reviewed and Ratified by Governors	Shared with Staff	Last Updated	Review cycle	Next Review due
Victoria Joyce, School Business Manager	October 2026	October 2026	October 2026	Annual	October 27

1. Statement of Intent

Shefford Lower School has an important responsibility to recruit staff in a fair, professional, efficient and lawful manner. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expect all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. We will ensure that discriminatory practices are identified and removed and that non-discriminatory practices are applied in all areas of employment, including recruitment, training, and promotion.

This policy adopts recruitment and selection procedures and other people management processes that help to deter, reject, or identify people who may be a risk to children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

1.2 Legal Framework

This policy is written in line with the Safer Recruitment Guidance outlined in the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education and within the context of the Equality Act 2010. It also complies with:

- Section 11 of the Children Act 2004
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- The Crime and Policing Act 2026
- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (effective September 2026)

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Chapter Two of Central Bedfordshire Council's Schools Personnel Handbook (Code of Practice for Recruitment and Selection)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Data Protection Policy

1.3 Scope

This policy is written in line with any relevant national legislation and is aimed at all individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of staff and is to act as a reference point for all recruiters.

1.4 EYFS-Specific Application

For our Early Years Foundation Stage provision, this policy incorporates additional requirements as set out in the EYFS statutory framework, including specific safeguarding, qualification, and notification requirements.

2. Equality and Diversity Commitment

2.1 Protected Characteristics

Shefford Lower School must ensure that discriminatory practices are identified and removed and that non-discriminatory practices are applied in all areas of employment, including recruitment, training, and promotion. It is extremely important that the process is carried out in a fair, professional, and lawful manner and that the most suitable candidate is appointed irrespective of any of the below protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010.

The Protected Characteristics are:

- Age
- Religion or Belief
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Sex
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Sexual Orientation
- Race, ethnicity, or national origin

2.2 Our Commitments

Schools and their governing bodies must be committed to and fully accept their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Treat people with dignity and respect and accept people as individuals.
- Understand and address the needs of individuals or groups relating to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity (including breast feeding), race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Engage with service users, local communities, staff, stakeholders, and contractors to identify and implement improvements.
- Tackle barriers which restrict access to services and employment opportunities.
- Knowing who uses (or should use) different services.
- Ensuring recruitment, selection, training, and promotion processes support them to appoint the best candidate for the role and to develop and maintain the highest standards of skills and expertise.

2.3 Training Requirements

All members of selection panels, including governors, should undergo training on equal opportunities selection interviewing.

Governing bodies of maintained schools are required to ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

3. The Recruitment Process

3.1 Identifying a Vacancy

The recruitment and selection cycle begin once a vacancy occurs. A vacancy can occur due to a number of different reasons some of which are as follows:

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- A new post has been created
- An employee has recently left and needs to be replaced
- An employee has transferred to another post and needs to be replaced
- There has been an increase in workload
- There is a requirement for new skills
- There has been a structural change.

When a vacancy occurs due to an employee leaving, the exit interview is often the first stage of the recruitment process and is an ideal opportunity to gather essential information from the post holder that will help you to:

- Decide whether the post is actually needed, needs to be modified, whether there is a need to review working practices or if the duties could be assimilated by other members of staff.
- Review the job description to establish the main characteristics and features of the role are still accurate.
- Decide whether the post could be a secondment, job-share, or an apprenticeship.

3.2 Before Advertising

Before starting the advertisement process, you should consider whether the below options are suitable (if yes this must be stated within the advertisement):

1. **Job-Shared:** Can the post be job-shared? All vacant full-time posts should be assessed to see whether they are suitable for job-sharers. All posts are potentially open to job-share and should be advertised as such unless it is clear the job-share would not work.
2. **Redeployment:** Is there an opportunity for an individual who is currently at risk of redundancy to be considered via redeployment? Where possible, the redeployment process helps to redeploy employees facing redundancy into suitable alternative roles.
3. **Development:** Could this be an opportunity for an individual to develop in an apprenticeship?
4. **Secondment:** Where a vacancy is time limited, e.g. due to maternity leave, long term absence, funding limits or project length offering a secondment may be an effective way of filling the job.

3.3 Job Descriptions

The job description is an essential tool in the recruitment process and needs to be created (brand new roles) or reviewed (existing roles) by the recruiting manager prior to writing the personnel specification and before advertising the post.

A job description is the first step towards a fair and objective selection. In order for this to happen a job description needs to:

- Be reviewed whenever a vacancy arises and fully researched and updated on a regular basis
- Indicate not only the functions and responsibilities but also the relative importance of each element of the job and any foreseeable changes associated with it.
- Highlight the extent of contact/responsibility for children and young people.
- Ensure that any responsibilities for Special Educational Needs (SEN) are clearly specified in individual job descriptions.
- Highlight the individuals' responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children/ young people they are responsible for or comes into contact with. (This includes where the post holder will work mainly or exclusively with adults. Some of these adults will be parents, grandparents or carers and will have contact with children and young people).

3.4 Personnel Specifications

Once the job description has been reviewed a personnel specification should be produced/reviewed in conjunction with the job description. It should be ensured, when doing this, that it does not become merely a

description of the previous post holder - this may lead to unintentional stereotyping. The personnel specification should always be produced prior to writing the advertisement so that a brief summary can be included in the advertisement.

The personnel specification is an essential recruitment document. Its purpose is to identify the skills and abilities, qualifications, experience etc. which are required in order to successfully carry out the job as specified on the job description.

You must take care to ensure that essential and desirable criteria are not seen as unfair or potentially discriminatory. It is important that the criteria is measurable, quantifiable, non-discriminatory and supported by evidence to allow the panel to assess candidates both at shortlisting and interview stage, on their ability to meet the specifications required for the role.

The selection criteria used on the personnel specification should be:

Criteria	**Explanation**
Realistic	Does the criteria relate directly to the duties to be performed?
Justifiable	Can the job be done without any of the essential criteria? If so, they should not be entered as 'essential'.
Specific and Measurable	How will you be able to tell accurately and objectively whether your criteria have been met?
Weighted	What priority does each preferred criterion take over other criteria?
Agreed	A scoring system against the essential and desirable criteria must be agreed by the interviewing and shortlisting panel.

3.5 EYFS Staffing Qualification Requirements

For EYFS positions, we will ensure compliance with specific qualification requirements:

General Requirements:

- At least 1 person who has a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings.
- We will verify PFA qualifications as part of our pre-employment checks for all EYFS staff, and will ensure that job descriptions and person specifications clearly state when PFA qualifications are required.

4. Advertising and Recruitment Packs

4.1 Advertisements

A good advertisement should be a compilation of the key points of the personnel specification and the job description. It is the first stage of the recruitment process that is shown to the public and is therefore projecting an image of the school.
All advertisements will:

- Use accessible and inclusive language
- Indicate any safeguarding responsibilities
- State if the post can be job-shared
- Include our commitment to safeguarding

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- Clearly state whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

4.2 Recruitment Packs

All information given to interested candidates should highlight the importance of the rigorous selection processes and the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. It should be clear that proof of identity will be required, as well as a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check where appropriate.

A recruitment pack should be compiled for each vacancy and sent out to every candidate. However, all packs should include:

- Job description & personnel specification
- Application form and any explanatory notes about completing the form
- The equal opportunities statement
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy statement
- Any relevant background information about the school and the recruitment process
- Relevant terms relating to the post

4.3 Application Forms

According to the Safer Recruitment Guidance outlined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education document, employers should use an application form to obtain a common set of core data. It is not good practice to accept curriculum vitae in place of an application form because this will not provide adequate information.

The application form/information pack should refer to the school's commitment to safeguarding children and state that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Prospective staff must disclose any information that may affect their suitability to work with children including, but not limited to, arrests, charges, convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings.

5.Shortlisting

5.1 Selection Panel

It is important that the selection panel is decided before advertising. By doing so it will allow the panel members to book time out of their diaries and plan, in advance, for the date(s) interviews and whether any additional selection methods will be held.

No one should be involved in shortlisting or interviewing if they are related to a candidate. Whenever possible, panels should be as diverse as possible in relation to the protected characteristics.

5.2 Shortlisting Process

Shortlisting is one of the most vital stages of the recruitment process and one which is particularly susceptible to poor judgement unless carefully and professionally handled.

Shortlisting should only take place after the advertisement has closed. On receipt of all application forms after the closing date all members of the panel should receive copies of the forms.

It is strongly recommended that members of the panel shortlist individually to avoid bias. They should then meet to discuss the results and finalise the agreed shortlist.

5.3 Scrutiny of Applications

All application forms should be scrutinised to ensure:

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- That they are fully and properly completed
- That the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies
- That gaps in employment/training or a history of repeated changes of employment are identified
- Be curious about the information you do have and don't have, consider and explore anything that sits outside of the process of gathering information

Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to shortlist the candidate. As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to, for example, supply teaching or temporary work, also need to be explored and verified.

5.4 Online Searches

In accordance with the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance, as part of the shortlisting process schools should carry out online searches on shortlisted candidates as part of their due diligence and should inform candidates that these searches may be undertaken.

Our Process:

- An appropriate and competent person who is not part of the selection panel will undertake searches
- They will share only necessary and relevant information with the members of the panel
- Any concerns identified will be explored with the candidate during the interview
- Candidates will be informed in the recruitment pack that online searches may be undertaken

5.5 Guaranteed Interview Schemes

Disability Confident Scheme: The Council is proud to be a Disability Confident employer, and should any candidate consider themselves to have a disability they will be offered a guaranteed interview should they meet the minimum/essential criteria for a role.

Armed Forces Covenant: Central Bedfordshire Council actively supports the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure that veterans are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. Part of the Council's commitment to this cause is to offer guaranteed interviews to veterans if they meet all the essential criteria of the post.
Any candidates that have declared that they should be considered for a guaranteed interview under the Disability Confident Scheme, or the Veteran Guaranteed Interview Scheme must be selected for interview if they meet the essential criteria for the role.

5.6 Record Keeping

Using a shortlisting proforma template the shortlisting panel should specify why each candidate was selected or rejected for the interview, keeping a brief written record.

5.7 Inviting Candidates to Interview

This should include:

- Post title
- Date, time, and location of interview
- Length of interview
- Instructions to ring, email or write and confirm acceptance of interview and provide details of any reasonable adjustments that may be considered to support the selection process
- Names and job titles of the interviewing panel
- Details of how to get to venue, map, parking arrangements, etc.

- Advance notification of the types of assessment methods if they are to be used in addition to the interview
- Name of the person to contact if there is a query
- Advice on accessibility of the venue
- A request for the candidate to complete a Criminal Record Self Declaration form. This form will only be viewed should the candidate be shortlisted for interview. If shortlisted the candidate must return this form **prior** to the interview.

5.8 Criminal Record Self-Declaration

Concerns or discrepancies arising from the Criminal Record Self Declaration form. Candidates shortlisted to interview will have been asked to complete this form and return to the school prior to the interview. Candidates should be given an opportunity to declare anything they feel relevant in light of the need for a DBS check. If the Criminal Record Self Declaration form has not been provided the candidate will need to be made aware of the importance of completing this as soon as possible.

Our Process:

- All shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a Criminal Record Self-Declaration form
- The form will only be viewed if the candidate is shortlisted for interview
- Candidates must return this form prior to the interview
- The interview panel will explore any concerns or discrepancies arising from the form during the interview

6.Interview Process

6.1 Interview Panels

The interview is a two-way communication process where candidates will be deciding whether they want to work for the school, as much as the interviewers are deciding whether the candidates are suitable for the post. The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job description and personnel specification and explore their suitability to work with children and young people.

The selection process for people who will work with children should always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate. Interviews should not be held prior to the closing date of the advertisement or before all applications have been considered for shortlisting.

Interviewers should never conduct an interview alone as this lays the whole process open to subjectivity and bias.

A panel of at least two people allows one member to observe and assess the candidate, and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other.

6.2 Pre-Interview Preparation

The members of the interview panel should:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment
- Meet before the interview to agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the personnel specification and to prepare a list of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post and who on the panel will ask which questions.
- Identify any issues they wish to explore with each candidate based on the information provided in their application form and in the reference
- Ensure that panel members are appropriately trained in safer recruitment practices and are familiar with current Keeping Children Safe in Education requirements and safeguarding responsibilities. Governing bodies of maintained schools are required to ensure that at least one of the persons who conducts an interview has completed safer recruitment training.

- Be aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality
- Use the candidate assessment form to record responses to interview questions and to support the interview/assessment decision making.

6.3 Safeguarding Focus

In addition to assessing and evaluating the candidates suitability for a post, the interview panel should also explore:

- The candidate's attitude towards children and young people including their motivation to work with children, their ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children
- Their emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviour and attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.
- Their attitudes to use of authority
- Their ability to support the school's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Gaps or anomalies in the candidates academic or employment history
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or reference
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the Criminal Record Self Declaration form.

6.4 Prohibited Questions

Questions about disability or health must not be asked at the interview stage or at any other stage before the offer of a job (whether conditional or not) has been made, or where the person has been accepted into a pool of candidates to be offered a position when one becomes available. All other questions regarding the candidate's health and previous levels of sickness prior to being offered the job must not be asked, unless it is for the sole purpose of determining whether the candidate could carry out a function essential to the job with 'reasonable adjustments' in place. In these circumstances you must seek advice from your HR/Payroll provider beforehand.

6.5 Documentation Required at Interview

According to Safer Recruitment and Government procedures candidates are required to bring the following documentation to the interview (if applicable):

- Evidence of their right to work in the UK and their identity. The Home Office have issued an Employers' Right to Work Checklist which all employers must comply with.
- Proof of educational or professional qualifications held that are relevant or necessary for the post. If this is not possible, written confirmation must be obtained from the awarding body.

Overseas Criminal Records: According to the Government guidance on the application process for criminal records checks overseas those applying for entry clearance to come to the UK under any of the visa routes to undertake certain jobs (such as further, secondary, primary, and special needs education teaching professionals), along with their adult dependents, will be subject to the requirement to produce a criminal record certificate. The certificate must be produced from any country (excluding the UK) in which they have been resident for 12 months or more (whether continuous or in total), in the previous 10 years before their application, while aged 18 or over.

6.6 Reasonable Adjustments

If a candidate has identified as part of the invite to interview process that they require reasonable adjustments, suitable adjustments must be made, and the adjustments recorded. Reasonable adjustments could be for example providing information in a different format e.g. Braille, allowing a disabled person extra time to complete a test or permitting a disabled person the assistance of a reader or scribe during the test.

6.7 Interview Structure

Interviews should be well structured but not inflexible. A good example of an interview structure is represented by WASP:

W – Welcome

- Greet the candidate and introduce yourself by name and job position
- Explain the structure of the interview to the candidate
- Be aware of first impressions and your own prejudices and avoid making 'snap' decisions
- If you intend to take notes then explain to the candidate that you are doing so

A – Acquire Information

- Keep your own talking to a minimum, encouraging the candidate to talk
- Avoid leading, closed and multiple questions
- Use open questions to encourage the candidate to 'open-up'
- Use probing questions to explore inconsistencies and depth of knowledge and experience
- Do not ask questions about personal circumstances that are not relevant to the job
- All questions should provide information that is relevant to the job description
- Summarise before moving into new areas

S – Supply Information

- Clarify and expand on the job description and school
- Clarify the terms of the job
- Give details on training if applicable

P – Plan and Part

- Invite questions from the candidate
- Tell the candidate how and when they will be contacted about the outcome
- Let the candidate know that the identity of the successful candidate will be checked thoroughly
- Part by thanking the candidate for attending and explaining the next steps

7. Pre-Employment Checks

7.1 Conditional Offers

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate should be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory written references, where possible confirmed by telephone. (One of which must be from the last employer that managed the candidate in a role working with the relevant group)
- Verification of the candidate's identity (if not already confirmed at interview)
- A satisfactory Disclosure & Barring Service Disclosure at the appropriate level as per the School's DBS Policy (unless the DBS Update Services applies)
- Evidence of right to work in the UK
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of the candidate's qualifications (if not already confirmed at interview)
- Verification of professional status/registration
- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction/ probationary period where appropriate

All checks should be:

- Confirmed in writing
- Documented and retained on the personal file (subject to the restrictions on the retention of information imposed by the DBS Regulations)
- Followed up if they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

7.2 EYFS-Specific Requirements

Enhanced DBS Checks: Individuals must not begin working or volunteering at a setting until their enhanced criminal records and barred list check has been received.

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Volunteer Checks: Providers must obtain an enhanced criminal records check and barred list check for all volunteers who carry out regulated activity frequently, more than 3 days in a 30-day period, or overnight.

References: Providers must obtain at least 1 written reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they're recruited.

7.3 DBS Checks and Regulated Activity

DBS Disclosure clearance is a vital tool to protect children and the vulnerable. Contracts are issued subject to satisfactory clearance, but it is important to conduct a risk assessment if the DBS Disclosure is delayed and it is intended that the successful candidate should start work.

Following the Crime and Policing Act 2026, any volunteer frequently teaching, training, instructing, or supervising children is legally in regulated activity, requiring an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. The previous supervision exemption no longer applies.

7.4 Right to Work Checks

There are two types of right to work checks that can be carried out: a manual check or an online check. The type of check required will depend on whether the candidate holds digital proof of their immigration status in the UK. It is important that you familiarise yourself with and follow the Government Guidance on checking a job applicant's right to work documentation. The Home Office have also issued an Employers' Right to Work Checklist which all employers must comply with. Should the candidate have limited permission to work in the UK it is crucial that the school records the end date for follow up when required.

7.5 Reporting Concerns

In situations where:

- The candidate is found to be on the DfE Children's Barred List or the DBS Disclosure shows they have been disqualified from working with children,
- The candidate has provided false information in, or in support of their DBS application, or
- There are serious concerns about a candidate's suitability to work with children

The facts should be reported to the police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service (if they are not already aware) and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

7.6 EYFS Notification to Ofsted

Providers must notify Ofsted (or their childminder agency) of any allegations of harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises, regardless of whether the allegations of harm or abuse are alleged to have been committed on the premises or elsewhere, for example, on a visit.
For our EYFS provision, we will notify Ofsted of any allegations of harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises, regardless of whether the allegations are alleged to have been committed on the premises or elsewhere. Such notifications will be made as soon as reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

8. Induction and Onboarding

8.1 Induction Programme

A good onboarding process is essential to welcome and retain new staff members and there should be an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed in a school.

The process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction programme the following should be considered as part of the onboarding/induction process:

- Outlining the employee's responsibilities and what will be expected from them
- Regular communication and supervision
- A welcome message and introduction to the team members
- Designated time set aside to orientate the new employee around the building and the team
- Ensure time is set aside for them to read new policies and for training purposes
- Always ask for feedback on what they found beneficial with their onboarding

8.2 KCSIE Requirements

Provide all new employees with Part One of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) document and ensure they have read, understood and are able to comply with its requirements. This applies to all employees regardless of whether they work directly with children, reflecting the expectation that all employees operate with the same safeguarding standards and responsibilities.

The previous Annex A condensed summary has been removed from KCSIE 2026, so all staff members (including those not working directly with children) must now read Part One in its entirety.

8.3 Safeguarding Training

Provide training and information about the schools' policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and child protection (for example, bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention and restraint, internet safeguarding and so on). This training should be at a level appropriate to the member of staffs' role and responsibilities with regard to children.

8.4 Additional Induction Elements

- Support staff in a manner appropriate to the role for which they have been engaged
- Confirm the safe practice and standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils within the school
- Provide new staff with an opportunity to discuss any concerns or issues about their role or responsibilities and advise them how to raise concerns going forward
- New staff will be informed of filtering and monitoring systems
- Enable the persons line manager (or mentor) to recognise any concerns or issues about the employee's suitability or ability at the outset and address them immediately
- Provide the identity and responsibilities of staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities
- Provide other relevant procedures (i.e. discipline, capability, whistleblowing etc.).

9. Whistle-blowing Procedures

9.1 EYFS Requirement
Providers must put appropriate whistle-blowing procedures in place for all staff (including students and volunteers) to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in the setting's provision. The procedures must include when and how to report concerns, and the process that will be followed after staff report concerns.

9.2 Our Whistle-blowing Policy

We have appropriate whistle-blowing procedures in place for all staff (including students and volunteers) working in our EYFS provision to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice.

Our whistle-blowing procedures clearly outline:

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- When to report concerns
- How to report concerns (including who to contact)
- The process that will be followed after staff report concerns
- Protection for staff who raise concerns in good faith
- External reporting routes if internal processes are not appropriate

9.3 Communication and Accessibility

All staff (including students and volunteers) will be made aware of the whistle-blowing procedures during their induction, and the procedures will be readily accessible to all staff at all times.

10. Record Keeping

10.1 Essential Records

Essential recruitment records will be kept allowing the school to justify each decision and the process by which it was reached and to respond to any complaints of discrimination.

Records will include:

- Any job advertisement, job description or personnel specification used
- Application forms or CVs from every candidate
- Records of discussions and decisions by the selection panel
- Notes taken during interviews
- Each interview panel member's marks at each stage
- All correspondence with candidates

10.2 Retention Period

The panel will record precise reasons why all unsuccessful interviewees have been rejected and retain their notes for a period of six months, after which point, they must be destroyed.

10.3 Single Central Record

Any documents received should be securely retained in the school and recorded on the School's Single Central Record if necessary.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and best practice.

11.2 Equality Monitoring

We will monitor our recruitment processes to ensure they are fair and non-discriminatory, using equal opportunities monitoring data appropriately.

12. Wellbeing Statement

At Shefford Lower School, we are committed to nurturing the wellbeing of all staff as an integral part of our safer recruitment practices. We have adopted the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter and integrate wellbeing into all policy and decision-making at a strategic level.

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We recognise that staff wellbeing is fundamental to creating a safe and positive learning environment for our pupils. A workforce that feels supported and valued is better equipped to safeguard children effectively. In implementing this safer recruitment policy, we will consider the impact on staff workload and mental health, ensuring that we give the same consideration and support to mental health as we do to physical health.

Our commitment to wellbeing in recruitment and retention includes:

- **Promoting a wellbeing-centric culture** from the point of recruitment, ensuring prospective staff understand our commitment to their wellbeing
- **Supporting new staff** through comprehensive induction processes that include wellbeing support and clear guidance on accessing help
- **Providing clear routes** for all staff to access appropriate guidance, support and tools to maintain their wellbeing
- **Recognising the demands of safeguarding work** and ensuring staff involved in child protection have access to appropriate supervision and support

We acknowledge that working in safeguarding and responding to child protection concerns can be emotionally demanding. Staff should access appropriate support following any distressing incident, including debriefing opportunities and access to our senior mental health lead where applicable.

By maintaining high standards of staff wellbeing, we strengthen our capacity to recruit, retain and support a skilled workforce committed to keeping children safe.

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