

GROUNDWORK

CHANGING PLACES

CHANGING LIVES



Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

This policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, senior management and Governors of Route2Work College within Groundwork SaNT.

[DBS Update Service - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[R2W Safer Recruitment Checklist](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

This policy statement is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure its continued suitability

1 Introduction

Groundwork South and North Tyneside, Route2Work College (hereafter referred to as R2W) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and expects all staff to share in this commitment.

R2W is overseen by a Committee of Governors, who are a delegated group of the Board of Trustees of Groundwork SaNT and an Executive Management Team who are fully aware of and committed to their responsibilities in protecting the safety of our learners and staff.

The purpose of safe recruitment is ultimately to:

Deter: From the beginning of the recruitment process, it is important to send the right message. Wording in adverts and recruitment information must aim to deter potential abusers.

Identify and Reject. It will not always be possible to deter potential abusers. Therefore, careful planning for the interview and selection stage, in terms of asking the right questions, and obtaining the right information can assist in finding out who is suitable for the role and who is not.

Prevent and Reject. There are no guarantees that even the most robust safer recruitment process will prevent an inappropriate appointment. However, this does not mean it is too late to act. Ensuring that comprehensive induction processes are in place, together with appropriate policies and procedures, raising awareness through staff training and generally developing and maintaining a safe culture within the organisation will all help to prevent abuse or identify potential abusers.

The intention of this policy statement is to ensure that all stages of the recruitment process contain measures to deter, identify, prevent and reject unsuitable people from gaining access to students within R2W. This policy and the practical implementation of recruitment and selection processes also aim to meet all legislative requirements, any statutory or other guidance that may from time to time be issued in order to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe, and safer recruitment in education, as well as principles of general good practice.

In addition, R2W aims:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds of any protected characteristic, including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

R2W promotes a culture of responsibility and safety by ensuring that everyone working for, or on behalf the Trust and Governors has provided the appropriate identification and documents.

This statement should be read in conjunction with our Recruitment Policy, the Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and our Safeguarding Policy.

In compliance with the Department for Education's Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges regarding Keeping Children Safe in Education (available to view at www.gov.uk), the College has the following safeguards in place:

2 Our Processes

R2W processes set out in this document aim to ensure that R2W attracts, recruits and retains individuals suitable to work in Further Education and who will share our commitment to safeguarding our students and staff. They also aim to prevent those people who pose a risk of harm to children or vulnerable adults working in positions of trust.

R2W has established processes in place to make referrals to the relevant and appropriate bodies regarding any concerns it may have about an individual, or where allegations have been made against any staff or volunteers / members of R2W staff.

R2W ensures compliance with the obligations defined by Ofsted and the Department for Education.

2.1 Safeguarding: -

R2W has a trained safeguarding team, which includes a Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer and a Deputy Safeguarding Officer. The job description for this lead explicitly details their safeguarding responsibilities. All staff are made aware of the team at induction and they know the appropriate circumstances in which to contact the team about a young person or vulnerable adult. The Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer, as well as the Deputy Safeguarding Officer, undertakes DSL training every two years, to maintain knowledge and share best practice.

3 Expectations of Governors

For the purposes of the R2W Safeguarding Policy, Governors are considered to be part of the College 'staff'. They are expected to share in R2W's commitment to safeguarding and protecting the welfare and wellbeing of R2W learners and staff and as such, they too receive the necessary training and updates. As our college is deemed a 'specified place', all Governors are also subject to enhanced DBS checks and checks against the Barred List for Children.

3.1 Expectations of Staff: -

R2W's commitment to safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults is advertised on job documents and a variety of other publications, to highlight the expectations on staff from the outset of their employment with us.

As part of a thorough and holistic induction process, all new employees of R2W receive Level 1 and Level 2 Safeguarding Training. The Charter/Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Protection Statement, as well as Part 1 of the Government's Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance are highlighted to all staff as part of this induction process. Staff are asked to sign the documents to indicate their understanding of R2W's expected standards and their own obligations to our commitment to safeguard our young people and vulnerable adults.

4 Recruitment of Staff (see R2W Safer Recruitment Checklist)

4.1 Job Analysis

When a vacancy arises due to an employee leaving or moving to a different role, it cannot be assumed that a 'like for like' replacement is required. A review of the job description may highlight the fact that the existing role no longer meets current needs. Therefore, the requirements for any replacement or new role will be analysed prior to drawing up the Job Description and Person Specification which define the role.

For newly created roles a Job Description and Person Specification will be created by the senior manager in liaison with the HR Team.

4.2 Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the recruitment process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role. Job descriptions will include general responsibility for safeguarding.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

An assessment by the HR Team and Senior Manager will be made at this stage on whether the role is subject to a DBS or Basic Disclosure check in line with current good practice and with external advice as necessary.

4.3 Application Forms (see R2W Application Form)

A suitably-structured, pre-defined application form will be used for recruitment to all R2W posts including volunteers. CVs in isolation will not be accepted because CVs are left to the discretion of individual applicants and contain only information that they choose to provide, whereas application forms are employer-led, requiring specific information from all applicants.

The use of application forms will help to ensure that detailed information, critical to the recruitment process, can be gathered from all applicants in a consistent format.

Application forms to be used for all recruitment will include as a minimum:

- Personal details including name, former names, date of birth, current address, NI number and, for teachers, teacher reference number
- Qualifications
- Present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
- Full history since leaving school - education, employment and any voluntary work, as well as an explanation of any gaps which can be investigated
- Request for details of appropriate referees (see also 'References' below)
- The requirement for a personal statement addressing the criteria set out in the job description and person specification
- Explanation that the post is exempt from the provisions of Section 4 (2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exceptions) Order 1975 and the requirement for a 'self-disclosure' – a signed declaration of any unspent and spent criminal offences.
- Opportunity to declare if they have ever been the subject of an investigation or inquiry into abuse or other inappropriate behaviour.
- Confirmation that the person has a right to work in the UK
- The requirement for a signed declaration that all information provided is true. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is 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 and other professional regulatory bodies.(e.g.: General Teaching Council for England).

4.4 Advertising

Adverts will affirm Groundwork's commitment to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and will make clear the level of DBS check required. All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

The recruitment pack will ensure that applicants have all the information they need about our organisation and the advertised role. Our Safeguarding Policy will also be sent to prospective applicants as part of the application pack.

As advised through KCSIE 2023, references will be requested before interview and this will be clarified at the advert stage.

The advert stage/application form also state that all shortlisted candidates will be subjected to an 'online' search.

There is evidence to show that the recruitment process is more successful when candidates can talk informally to someone who knows about the post. Therefore, managers are advised to provide a contact number for informal enquiries and should ensure that this person is available during the period that the post is being advertised or that back-up arrangements can be put in place in the case of temporary absence. Managers also have the option to offer informal visits to candidates prior to the interview process. This is not essential but may be desirable particularly for more senior roles. Informal visit will not form part of either the shortlisting process or the interview process.

4.5 Equal Opportunities

Each advert will contain a statement confirming Groundwork's commitment to being an equal opportunity employer.

4.6 Shortlisting

To support safer recruitment and ensure fairness in the process, the recruitment panel should take adequate time to properly scrutinise the applications.

For consistency it is recommended to assess each application against the criteria, including criteria specific to working with children through the use of a checklist

The recruitment panel will also consider whether each application is fully completed – if not, it may be returned to the applicant or discarded from the process. They will highlight any gaps (in employment etc.) to be explored further at interview should the candidate be long/shortlisted

4.7 Invitation to Interview

Interview invitations will be sent to shortlisted candidates and will include details of the scope of the interview. Candidates will be asked to confirm their intention to attend.

4.8 Self-disclosure form

A self-disclosure form gives candidates the opportunity to tell you confidentially about any unspent criminal convictions, child protection investigations or disciplinary procedures they have on their record. If the role requires an enhanced criminal records check, applicants will also be asked to disclose any unprotected spent convictions and cautions.

In England you can only ask for information about cautions or convictions which are not designated as 'protected' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

Applicants will be asked to complete a self-disclosure form before interview and submit them in confidence to the HR Team. Self-disclosure forms of candidates will only be viewed by the HR Team for those candidates who have accepted a conditional offer, when information provided will be reviewed as part of our vetting checks. All other self-disclosure forms submitted will be securely disposed of.

The self-disclosure form does not replace the need for a criminal records check. Criminal records checks will also be carried out as appropriate.

4.9 Interviews.

Recruitment and selection interviews will normally be carried out by two or more people.

A set of the same basic questions, including at least one Safeguarding question, to ask all shortlisted candidates should be prepared in advance. However, additional follow-up questions are likely to be needed at the interview itself as a means of probing for additional information. These questions will depend upon initial responses given by individual candidates.

Interviews will be used to:

- Focus on the requirements to carry out the duties of the job, as described
- Explore issues relating to the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults including:
 - Motivation to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults
 - Understanding of the needs and perspectives of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - Have realistic expectations
 - Recognise that children's needs come first
 - To test attitudes, awareness and understanding of safeguarding
 - Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, including use of appropriate language.
 - Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours
- To investigate any gaps in employment.

Profiles for volunteer roles will also be drawn up according to the principles set out above.

Other assessment and selection methods, in addition to an interview, may also be used. The nature of these will depend upon the type and level of the post.

The interview is an opportunity to gain a lot of information about the candidate but it can be of limited value in predicting how a candidate will perform in the job. Skills assessments should be used in addition to assess a number of relevant factors in the person specification. This may include one of the following forms;

Micro-teach/Verbal Presentation – the presentation subject, amount of preparation time and length of presentation can be varied to suit the role. This method is useful to assess

verbal communication skills, knowledge and understanding of a particular topic and time management skills.

Seen interview questions – candidates are given the questions 10-15 minutes before their interview. This gives the opportunity for candidates to structure responses, calm nerves, think about as much information to give interviewers as possible.

In-tray exercises – candidates are given a number of documents which they could be faced with in the job and asked to produce a written plan of how to deal with them within a given time. This is a good method of simulating the administrative/ organisational/ managerial aspects of the job and is a useful tool to assess how the candidates are likely to perform in the role.

Written paper – the candidate prepares a written paper on a specified topic, usually with a specified maximum number of words. This method enables selectors to evaluate technical knowledge, written communication and research skills. This method can also be used to aid shortlisting if used as part of the initial application process.

Personality questionnaires – these questionnaires can be used to produce a personality profile. The relevance of aspects of the personality profile will be interpreted by a trained assessor who will present the results to the selection panel.

Aptitude tests – candidates would complete a written questionnaire, normally time limited, to assess their aptitude in a specified area (e.g., numerical or verbal reasoning). The questionnaire is scored and compared with a relevant group.

Group discussion – candidates would discuss a topic as a group. Trained observers monitor the discussion and assess candidates. This exercise is used to assess communication skills, decision-making, influence, sensitivity and emotional resilience.

Attainment tests – candidates would carry out a practical work-related test or task to assess their attainment or skill in a particular activity e.g., typing speed and accuracy, spelling, checking.

Work sample – the candidate would produce a specified sample of work in a given time e.g., assembling a component, using a piece of equipment. This enables the selectors to evaluate skill, speed and quality.

In line with the Learner Voice Framework and Policy, learners should be engaged in the recruitment process/interviews where possible.

4.10 Employment Checks

All employees, paid workers and volunteers who are in regulated activity will have an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check carried out. This will include agency workers. For visiting staff/workers it is for the providing organisation to carry out checks and Groundwork will obtain written confirmation that checks have been made.

New DBS check will be completed every 3 years or when:

- A person moves to a new role which will involve regulated activity.
- The person has a break from employment for more than three months

- There are concerns about the person, which may affect his or her suitability

Basic Disclosure checks will be carried out for staff who have access to young person/vulnerable adult's personal and sensitive data.

Groundwork will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (not including Barred List information), for those employees who are not engaging in regulated activity, but have the opportunity to come into regular contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults on a regular basis.

In addition, all employees will have the following checks

- their identity confirmed;
- if the individual lives or has lived outside of the UK, other checks carried out e.g., overseas checks; and
- their right to work in the United Kingdom.

Further information about our DBS checking process is contained in our Recruitment Policy. Employment is conditional upon receipt of a DBS considered satisfactory by Groundwork.

We aim to have all R2W staff signed to the DBS Update Service. Therefore, once a DBS is received the employee will be encouraged to sign up to the DBC Update Service within 28 days. R2W will pay the annual fee.

4.10.1 Agency and third-party staff

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, when using agencies Groundwork will also adopt the same robust recruitment and vetting procedures that minimise the risk of employing people who may abuse their position of trust or who are otherwise unsuited to such work.

In these circumstances, agencies and other third parties will be required to provide written assurances about their recruitment and selection practices and, in particular, that workers supplied by them have been subject to similar checks and safeguards in place for new employees and workers taken on directly by Groundwork. Where the position requires a barred list check this must also be obtained by the agency or third-party prior to appointing that individual.

Checks should include all essential areas of the checking process, i.e. relating to Enhanced DBS and Barred List checks, Prohibition Order checks, identity checks, Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act checks, overseas (including EEA checks) as well as checks such as qualifications, references, reasons for leaving previous positions.

Groundwork will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made by checking photographic identification and written confirmation that a DBS check has been carried out and that as a result the person has been assessed as able to work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

4.10.2 Volunteers

The DBS cannot provide Barred List information on people, including volunteers, who are not in regulated activity. The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 amended the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, removing supervised volunteers from regulated activity.

If the volunteer is to be supervised while undertaking an activity, which would be regulated activity if it was unsupervised, the statutory guidance must be followed.

The guidance issued following this change requires that:

- there must be supervision by a person who is in regulated activity;
- the supervision must be regular and day to day; and
- the supervision must be “reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children”.

Groundwork will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (not including Barred List information), for volunteers who are not engaging in regulated activity, but have the opportunity to come into contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults on a regular basis, e.g., supervised volunteers.

Where Groundwork cannot guarantee that a volunteer who is in regular contact with children and young people will be continually supervised on an on-going basis then it is our professional judgement that an enhanced DBS check with a barred list needs to be undertaken.

4.10 3 College Governors

Once a Governor of our College has been accepted as a Governor by the governing body, they will be submitted to a number of checks before formal appointment as a Governor. Before this formal appointment they will have:

- an enhanced DBS check including a barred list check;
- their identity confirmed;
- if the individual lives or has lived outside of the UK, other checks carried out e.g., overseas checks; and
- In addition, they will require their DBS Check to include Section 128 Management and Leadership check.

During the period when a governor is not yet formally appointed, they may visit the College site and participate in governor meetings and activities, but only under normal visitor checks and requirements. They may not have unsupervised access to any pupils or carry out any regulated activity

4.10.4 Contractors

The college will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the College has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information).

For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including Barred List information) will be required. In considering whether the contact is regular, it is irrelevant whether the contractor works on a single site or across a number of sites. Generally, contractors are not checked by their employers so must be supervised at all times.

Where a contract exists with a company for regular contract workers or where contract workers are in regulated activity, an agreement will be made between the contracting company and the contractor for them to carry out adequate ID and security checks including enhanced DBS checks for any regular contractors. Even with this agreement in place, the College will remain vigilant and follow up any concerns that are raised about a contractor.

Under no circumstances should a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised, or engage in regulated activity. The College is responsible for determining the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances. If a contractor is self-employed, the College will consider obtaining a DBS check, the College will check the identity of contractors and their staff on arrival at the College.

5 Visitors

The college does not have the power to request DBS checks and barred list checks, or ask to see DBS certificates, for visitors (for example children's relatives or other visitors attending). The Head of the college will use their professional judgment about the need to escort or supervise visitors. Where possible names of visitors will be attained in advance and identification checked by reception. All visitors also will be given a specific visitors badge to wear, to enable identification whilst in college.

6 Adults who supervise children on work experience

When organising work experience placements, Groundwork will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm. Barred list checks by the DBS might be required for some people who supervise a child under the age of 16 on a work experience placement but the specific circumstances of the work experience, in particular the nature of the supervision and the frequency of the activity being supervised, will determine what, if any, checks are necessary.

These considerations would include whether the person providing the instruction and supervision to the child will be:

- unsupervised; and
- providing the instruction frequently (at least once a week or on more than three days in a 30-day period, or overnight).
- If the person working with the child is unsupervised and the same person is in frequent contact with the child, the work is likely to be regulated activity.

7 Prohibition Orders

Secretary of State Prohibition Orders Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State. Prohibition orders prevent a person from carrying out teaching work at our college. The College will check that anyone employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a Prohibition Order issued by the Secretary of State. Prohibition from teaching does not only include those with a QTS number and may include peripatetic staff, coaches or even teaching assistants etc. It is the type of work carried out not the job title which counts.

Teaching work is defined in The Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 to encompass:

- Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils
- Delivering and preparing lessons to pupils
- Assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils
- Reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils

The College will therefore decide on a case-by-case basis, in the light of its own practice, the extent to which such roles as teaching assistants and similar posts fall under these regulations. The check is completed using the Employer Online service or through DBS checks.

This applies to those appointed to teach on or after 1 April 2014, although there is no requirement to retrospectively check teachers who commenced their current employment prior to that date and existing staff will have been checked in line with previous guidance for checking QTS status.

From 1 January 2020, the Teaching Regulation Agency no longer held and maintained a list of EEA teachers with sanctions, therefore, for applicants that have lived or worked outside of the UK for a period of three months or more at any time, we ensure we receive a certificate of good conduct from the relevant country/countries. If a member of staff has taught abroad as part of their employment history, they must also provide at least one reference from the last educational establishment they were employed at, in each country (if the person has worked as a teacher in more than one country). This is in addition to obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with Barred List checks, even if the teacher has never been to or worked in the UK before.

8 Offers of Employment

Once shortlisting has been completed, Human Resources will identify any essential questions needed to understand (for example) any gaps in employment, any time spent overseas. A question sheet is provided to all interview panel members to highlight that these questions must be asked and responses documented.

As advised through KCSIE 2022, references will be requested before interview. Two references are sought for each employee and any issues or concerns are clarified fully.

This, along with any other information received regarding either the unsuitability of an applicant or the applicant's criminal record is noted before an interview takes place.

Interview panels are chaired by a member of the SMT, who will have been appropriately trained in Safer Recruitment and as such, are skilled to ask the questions intended to elicit unusual and unsatisfactory career histories, behaviour, opinions or attitudes from interview candidates. This provides the opportunity to adequately question and investigate the applicant and to base the recruitment decision on the candidate's merit, as well as their attitude to young people, vulnerable adults and their safeguarding.

Once a conditional offer of employment has been made, the Human Resources Team will arrange for completion of new starter checks.

Offers of employment are made conditionally, and are dependent upon the receipt of satisfactory references, DBS checks, validation of identity, confirmation of right to work and evidence of any qualifications required to undertake the role. Staff are made aware of the

conditions attached to their appointment and where the required documentation has not been received, the Human Resources team will issue timely reminders.

Staff engaged as teaching roles within our college will need to have a prohibition check.

New starters are informed as part of their recruitment that should Groundwork not receive the essential information required in a timely manner; Groundwork reserves the right to withdraw the offer of employment.

9 Onboarding

All new starters and volunteers receive an induction at the start of their employment, bespoke to their role and responsibilities.

Training includes:

- Safeguarding Level 1 / Level 2 and an introduction to organisational policy, practice and procedures.
- Health and Safety
- Equality and Diversity
- GDPR Training
- Sustainability

Further training is then undertaken appropriate to their role with Designated Safeguarding Leads undertaking training to Level 3.

Refreshers are provided throughout employment to refresh knowledge.

A probation period is in place for all staff where they are supported to settle into their new role and the organisation. Training plans are reviewed throughout the probation period with line managers holding regular planned review meetings. Employment is subject to the successful completion of the probation period.

Staff undertake Level 1 Safeguarding, Level 2 Safeguarding or both depending on their role.

10 Centralised Record

All individuals working for, or on behalf of the College have the necessary information checked and the required clearance obtained, to ensure they are eligible to work:

- in the role they have been appointed to
- with children and/or vulnerable adults (as relevant)
- in Further Education
- at Groundwork R2W College
- in the UK

This information is stored centrally in our Single Central Record (SCR). The SCR is scrutinised every half-term by HR and the DSLO to ensure it is accurate and up-to-date.

Developed By: HR Team & Rachel Kitson

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