

International School of Flanders

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ISF SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

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The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. ISF is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. ISF is also committed to providing a supportive and flexible working environment to all its members of staff. ISF recognises that, in order to achieve these aims, it is of fundamental importance to attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter- agency cooperation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

ISF recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce, which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities.

ISF is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the school is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. ISF will uphold its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

The aims of ISF's recruitment policy are:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) (KCSIE) ('The Guidance') and any advice published by the Belgian Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);

- to ensure that the School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre- employment checks.

All positions within ISF are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service Check.

ISF is committed to ensuring that people who have been convicted are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position. This will depend on the background, nature and circumstances of the offence(s).

Pre-employment checks

In accordance with the recommendations set out in the Guidance, and the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 ISF carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following a formal interview, employment with ISF will be conditional on the following:

- verification of the applicant's identity;
- production of evidence of the right to work in Belgium (for any member of staff who is not a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country);
- receipt of at least one reference which is satisfactory to ISF one of which will be from the applicant's most recent employer. If a verbal reference is taken, detailed notes will be taken, dated and signed. All references will be verified by phone;
- the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the Belgian DBS which EIAF considers to be satisfactory. Number, date and name of person who completed check to be recorded
- verification of the applicant's qualifications;
- the school considers the applicant is suitable for the position

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Head and other Leadership team members involved in the recruitment process to:

- ensure that the School operates safe recruitment procedures and carries out all appropriate checks on all staff and volunteers who work at the School;
- monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this policy; and
- promote the welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies that provide services to ISF to comply with safer recruitment practices. It is the responsibility of ISF, in conjunction with the Executive Head to ensure all pre-employment checks are complete before employment begins.

Verification of Identity and Address

All applicants who are who are shortlisted will be required to bring the following evidence of identity, right to work, address and qualifications:

- passport, photo-card (together with counterpart) driving licence and original birth certificate
- original documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications referred to in their application form;
- where an applicant claims to have changed his/her name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) he/she will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

The Procedure

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, ISF will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. Normally this will entail an external advertisement. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.

Applications

All applications are sent to the Executive Head for consideration. Applicants are required to send an up to date CV and letter of motivation. The applicant may then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail. ISF requires applicants to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on their CV. Where an applicant is shortlisted, any gaps will also be discussed at interview.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in an application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected. Where

false information is provided in support of an application to work at ISF, the School is required to report the matter to the Belgian DBS, the police and other relevant professional bodies.

References

References for shortlisted applicants (to include the last employer the applicant worked for) will be requested immediately after short-listing. The only exception to this is where applicants have indicated that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted.

If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second referee will be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:

- the applicant's dates of employment, position held, salary, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record
- their relationship to the applicant
- whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children
- whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired)
- whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people.

ISF will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant or open references or testimonials.

ISF will not accept references from relatives of the applicant or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend.

References will be compared to the CV to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant and/or the referee before any appointment can be confirmed. Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.

Criminal Records Check

Due to the nature of the work, ISF requests the candidate to provide a criminal check to work with children from the Belgian DBS for all positions in the school including volunteers.

Interviews

The selection process may include the following:

- a face to face professional interview including questions related to safeguarding children;
- an activity with children, as appropriate

All recruitment will be undertaken with at least one member of the panel having undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. Questions will be agreed in advance by the panel. The panel will undertake a regular review of safer recruitment procedures. The Executive Head will make the final decision. Salary is based upon salary scales.

When a successful candidate is found and checks have successfully been undertaken a contract is drawn up in Flemish and is signed by the Executive Head or Director of Administration and the candidate.

The candidate is given a copy of the WorkPlace Regulations and job description.

Staff Training on Safer Recruitment

Key staff involved in the recruitment of new personnel will undertake Safer Recruitment training: Certificates of qualification are held on the individual's personnel file.

Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status

Short-listed applicants will be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing original documentation. ISF will verify that applicants have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant original certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the School will require sight of a properly certified copy.

Contractors, Agency and Peripatetic Staff

Contractors engaged by ISF must complete the same checks for their employees that the School is required to complete for its staff. The School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the School.

Agencies who supply staff to ISF must also complete the pre-employment checks which the School would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the School.

Peripatetic staff will complete the same checks the School is required to take for all other staff. The School will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency.

Assessment Criteria

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 disclosure check, ISF will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question
- 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
- 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 School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences:

- murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence; or
- 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 School'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 School's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving within the last ten years.

Assessment procedure

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 disclosure check, ISF will carry out a risk assessment by reference to the criteria set out above. Such convictions will also be discussed with the applicant at interview.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, he/she can do so by contacting the DBS directly. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the School will, where practicable, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

Retention and security of DBS disclosure information

ISF's policy is to observe the guidance issued or supported by the Belgian DBS on the use of disclosure information.

In particular, the School will:

- store disclosure information and other confidential documents issued by the DBS in locked, non-portable storage containers, access to which will be restricted to members of the School's senior management team
- not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary.

Record Retention / Data Protection

If an applicant is appointed, the School will retain any relevant information provided on his/her CV, together with any attachments and evidence of the pre-employment checks completed on his/her personnel file. If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will normally be confidentially destroyed after one year unless otherwise agreed with the candidate.

Single Central Register of Recruitment Vetting Checks (SCR)

From October 2017, ISF keep and maintain a SCR. The SCR will list all staff who are employed at the School, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, board members, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not employed by the School e.g. specialist sports coach.

The SCR will indicate whether the required pre-employment checks have been completed.