



Creative Inclusion

LEARNING STUDIO

Creative Inclusion: An Independent Alternative
Specialist Provision

Safer Recruitment Policy

Effective Date: July 2025

Approved by: Advisory Board August 2025

Review Date: July 2026

Rationale

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners and we have a duty to ensure safe recruitment of Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) staff and volunteer helpers to this ALP.

We wish to appoint the most suitable person for each vacant position regardless of age or perceived age, marital status, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or disability. Also, we will take no account of an applicant's membership or non-membership of a trade union.

We intend to deter prospective applicants and to identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with learners. Existing employees, employees on fixed or temporary contracts will be invited to apply.

We believe our recruitment and selection process is systematic, efficient, effective and equal. All applicants must declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure and Disqualification Declaration as all posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

We wish to work closely with the learners to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Student that learners should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We, as a learning community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken, and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Aims

- To ensure the practice of safe recruitment of staff and volunteer helpers.
- To ensure that a fair and legal recruitment procedure is in place.
- To have in place clear procedures for DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks for all ALP staff, volunteers and new appointments in order to ensure the safety and welfare of learners and young people.
- To undertake additional pre-employment screening to meet the requirements of the Single Central Record as required by the Department for Education.
- To work with other ALPs and alternative provisions to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure

Role of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board has:

- the responsibility of ensuring that the safe recruitment process complies with DfE guidance and legal requirements
- delegated certain powers and responsibilities to the Head of Provision to oversee compliance with DfE guidance and legal requirements
- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Head of Provision to ensure all ALP staff and visitors to the ALP are aware of and comply with this policy
- responsibility for ensuring that the ALP complies with all equality's legislation; adopted the Local Authority DBS Policy
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents
- nominated a link Advisory Board member to visit the ALP regularly, to liaise with the Head of Provision, including scrutiny of the Single Central Record at least three times per academic year and to report back to the Advisory Board
- responsibility to agree the staffing structure and proposed number of established posts each academic year, as recommended by the Leadership Team (LT)
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Head of Provision

The Head of Provision will:

- implement this policy
- promote the safeguarding and welfare of learners
- ensure the ALP operates safe recruitment procedures
- organise safe recruitment training for ALP staff involved in recruitment
- regularly review the number of established posts in liaison with LT and make recommendations to the Advisory Board relating to staffing structure and post numbers for each academic year (usually in term six for the following academic year)
- ensure all appointment panels include one person who has successfully passed safe recruitment training

- ensure all appropriate pre-employment checks are completed on ALP staff and volunteer helpers
- ensure contractors and agencies comply with this policy
- participate as necessary in the appointment of ALP staff ensure all ALP staff, learners and parents are aware of and comply with this policy
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff
- inspect the Single Central Record regularly accompanied by the Therapeutic Pastoral Pathway Lead
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Role of the Staff

ALP staff will:

- comply with all aspects of this policy
- ensure they provide all the necessary documentation for the disclosure process
- implement the ALP's equalities policy and schemes
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination
- attend appropriate training sessions on equality
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the ALP community

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be made aware of this policy.

Safer Recruitment Procedure

At the end of term two of each academic year, the Advisory Board considers and reaches agreement on the proposed structure and number of posts for the following academic year as recommended by LT.

When a post becomes vacant or is created then the following procedure takes place:

Recruitment Request Form

New or additional posts

The Head of Provision must complete the Recruitment Proposal Form identifying the need for the post and setting out the business case as to why it is business critical. The form should be approved by the Chair of the Advisory Board before completion of the costing section. The Advisory Board will consider all Recruitment Proposal Forms and recruitment must not commence without their approval.

Existing posts

When an existing post becomes vacant, LT will consider the ongoing need for that post or any revisions to the post, at the LT meeting.

Job and Person Specification

- For every vacancy a job description and person specification will be written.

Job advertisement

- Unless it is agreed that a post will be advertised internally only (for example to encourage internal development and promotion) all posts will usually be advertised on the ALP website and some in the local and national press or online. Social media such as LinkedIn may be used to advertise vacant posts.
- All advertisements for posts will state that the ALP is committed to safeguarding learners and young people and all post holders are subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

Short-listing and References

- Applicants must complete the Application for Employment form; CVs will not be accepted.
- Short-listing will be undertaken independently by two members of the interview panel.
- Applicants will be short-listed for the post if they fully meet the person specification.
- Immediately after short-listing references will be sought. One reference must be from the applicant's most recent employer. The recruitment team will check the application form and references for any differences in dates or gaps in employment and an explanation will be sought from the applicant.
- The recruitment team will telephone the person who has provided the reference to verify it.
- Applicants' online digital footprint will be checked using the Security Watchdog social media checking service.
- All referees will be asked if the candidate is suitable to work with learners, has any disciplinary procedures relating to the safety and welfare of learners, or any details of allegations/concerns/bad behaviour relating to the safety and welfare of learners. For teachers, grades of teaching and learning observations over time will also be sought.
- Unsuccessful applicants will not be contacted.
- Short-listed candidates will be asked if they have a disability within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 and if they require any particular adjustments to accommodate their particular needs.

Selection Day(s)

- On the selection day all candidates will need to provide proof of identity, proof of their qualifications (if required) and proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK.
- All candidates will be assessed for their suitability to the post and their capability to safeguard and protect the welfare of learners and young people.

Job Offer

- The selection panel will identify the most suitable candidate.
- A job offer will be made by the Head of Provision. It will be subject to references and a satisfactory DBS clearance as well other safer recruitment checks as listed below.

Safer Recruitment checks for the successful candidate

Before taking up the post the following checks will be undertaken on the successful candidate:

- References – two in total, one must be from the most recent employer.
- If a candidate has no recent work experience, a reference will be sought from the last employer or if this is not possible, personal references rather than employer references will be requested. Typically, this can be from an education provider, volunteering organisation, church or other similar institution or a friend who knows the person well. Referees must not be a member of your family, or spouse/partner. For recent ALP or further education leavers, one reference must be from the Head of Provision or college tutor.
- Proof of identity - three official documents with photograph e.g. passport, driving license plus confirmation of current address e.g. utility bill. Where possible the birth certificate should be provided so that barred list checks can be made against previous names. Originals must be checked by the HR team.
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure for both child and adult workforce which includes a List 99 check.
- Disqualification Declaration/Barred List check.
- Medical fitness.
- Proof of qualifications (if required).
- Proof of QTS for teaching staff and Teacher Registration Number (TRN)
- Proof of a right to work in the UK.
- Overseas check for applicants who have lived abroad within the last 5 years.
- In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, an additional check will be carried out for candidates who are to be employed as teachers. This is to ensure that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online service. The ALP is registered with this service.
- Online presence check using the Security Watchdog Social Media checking service.
- Section 128 check for Advisory Board members.
- Disqualification by Association declaration.
- Proof of Covid vaccination unless medically exempt.

An appointment will not be confirmed until receipt of all of the above.

For successful candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK within the last 5 years, all mandatory checks outlined in this policy will be carried out, along with any additional checks where necessary.

These will include:

- Obtaining a reference or 'Certificate of Good Character'.
- For Teachers, obtaining proof of their past conduct as a teacher, in the form of a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which they worked.
- Where a professional letter of standing cannot be obtained, conducting a risk assessment or seeking alternative methods of checking suitability to support informed decision-making.

Internal candidates

Existing staff and volunteers who have been vetted when they joined the ALP do not need to complete another Application for Employment form to apply for a ALP vacancy. They will be required to write a statement setting out their interest in the job and detailing how they meet the job requirements. They will be interviewed/assessed in the same way as external applicants. The Head of HR or Academic Pathway Lead will inform internal applicants of the outcome of their interview.

Induction

The induction programme for all newly appointed ALP staff will include an introduction to all ALP policies dealing with the safeguarding of learners and young people including the DfE guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education. Safeguarding and key policies are "Required Reading" during the probationary period of employment.

Probationary Period

- All new employees will be subject to a probationary period of six months, during which their progress will be monitored by their line manager.
- Probation reviews will take place after three months and five months, after which a recommendation will be made to establish whether the employment should be confirmed or terminated, or whether the probation period should be extended. Probation reviews and records will be recorded in OneDrive and the staff module of LearnTrek. Management of Probationary periods will be in accordance with the ALP's Staff Probation Policy.

Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks

We believe the safety and welfare of learners and young people is paramount and we are fully committed to the procedures and arrangements of the Disclosure and Barring Service and Independent Safeguarding Authority.

We understand that this policy complies with the DFE document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the ALP Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, the Education (Restriction of Employment) Regulations 2003, the GDPR and the DBS Revised Code of Practice.

We acknowledge the immense importance of the DBS in providing access to disclosure checks for ALP staff, volunteer helpers and for new appointments to this ALP.

We will keep a single central record of recruitment and record checks of:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All teaching staff• Support staff• Supply staff• Volunteers• Interns and long-term work placements• Directly engaged contractors/freelancers who work with learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PB Members who work as volunteers• Local Authority and private tutors
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*Records kept in separate spreadsheet to main SCR

DBS disclosures will not be applied to the following as it is felt that they will have very little, if any, contact with learners, they will be escorted whilst on the ALP premises or that they will work under the supervision of a teacher:

- Secondary learners on work experience
- Representatives from educational firms
- Contractors (the company responsible for contractors will be required to confirm that DBS checks have been carried out)
- Occasional ALP event volunteers
- Contractors who are on site when learners are not present

No new employee, or anyone working directly with learners in a Regulated Activity as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education, will commence their appointment without an enhanced DBS check.

We will consider any person with a criminal record equally with others applying for any vacant post at this ALP unless their DBS disclosure check indicates that they present a risk to learners or the ALP in general.

Employment agencies supplying agency workers to the ALP will be required to provide written confirmation (by email) that the necessary safer recruitment checks have been carried out for their staff prior to any work at the ALP commencing. Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that existing staff whose checks were under the old police check/list 99 system prior to the introduction of CRB (now DBS) disclosure remain current as long as:

- there are no concerns
- no change to existing role/responsibility from non-regulated activity to regulated activity
- no break of service of 3 months

By law, all ALP staff newly employed since 12 May 2006 must have an Enhanced DBS check, unless they have continuous employment with less than three months break and no increase in their contact with children. There is no requirement to recheck staff once employed unless the criteria above are met. Staff contracts of employment and the Staff Handbook require staff to disclose any new occurrences that may impact on their DBS status or suitability to work with children (the criminal justice system is likely to notify the ALP or the Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer in such circumstances). All staff are required to read and confirm they have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education annually and attached to this confirmation is a declaration about any new offences, cautions etc.

Security of Information

- In compliance with the DBS Code of Practice and GDPR all disclosure information and records of all ALP staff will be safely handled, securely stored, retained and disposed of in a secure manner.
- We have in place the Single Central Record which records the receipt of all satisfactory DBS disclosures and pre-employment checks.

Reference Requests for those leaving ALP Employment

A professional reference is understood to be one which is provided to comment on one's conduct in the workplace, whether positive, neutral or negative, and/or suitability for the role held, and/or applied for, and/or recommendation of the person for the post/role/project applied for and any opinion cast over the person as a member of the organisation.

Reference requests relate to the following:

- Staff member requesting a professional reference
- Staff member requesting a personal/character reference
- Staff member being asked to provide a professional reference
- Staff member being asked to provide a personal/character reference

This guidance applies to the following groups of people:

- All staff employed directly by the ALP as paid employees in the past, currently or in the future
- All staff employed directly by the ALP or associated with the ALP as unpaid (voluntary) employees in the past, currently or in the future (with the exception of Advisory Board* - see below)
- All learners - past, current and future
- All parents/carers/family members of family friends of the learners (past, current, future)
- Any other person, in any way associated with the ALP, as an organisation

This guidance applies to:

- Creative Inclusion Independent Special ALP under its current and any future registration

- Creative Inclusion Independent Special ALP under its current and any future name
- All parts of the organisation in the past, now and in the future

Any requests for professional references or testimonials must be directed to the Head of Provision or Head of HR at the ALP, either in writing or by email. The Head of Provision or Head of HR or another senior member of staff (with the Head of Provision's permission) is to provide information for the reference.

No other person in the ALP may provide any reference or testimonial referring to the individual's professional conduct, qualities or potential. Any such reference will be treated as a professional reference, whether or not provided on ALP headed paper, or sent from the work email address. Staff, other than the Head of Provision or Head of HR, providing any such reference will be seen as operating in breach of this policy and are likely to be subjected to a disciplinary action.

A personal/character reference is understood to be one, which is provided to comment on a person's personality, character and qualities.

At Creative Inclusion Independent Special ALP, any request for a personal/character reference is permitted, as long as:

- It does not refer to the person's conduct at work, professional qualities or potential
- It is not sought or issued with any reference to the ALP
- It is not issued on a ALP's headed paper, using the ALP's address (postal or email) and/or referring to the job titles/roles held within the ALP (applicable equally to referee and applicant)
- It does not, knowingly, provide a personal reference for a person, who was disciplined and dismissed from their job at Creative Inclusion Independent Special ALP (current, future rule applies). ** (see explanation below)

*Advisory Board members - reference request from/for current Advisory Board Members must be addressed to:
36 John Street
Sunderland
SR1 1LN

** If a staff member is approached by a colleague who is known to have been dismissed from their job at Creative Inclusion ALP (see section above regarding definition), any reference will be deemed as "of safeguarding concern", should it be provided without mention of the dismissal. Staff are advised to contact the Head of Provision, who will advise regarding the potential personal risks and the legal implications of providing a personal reference for someone whose HR/other records may contain significant information which may not be fully known (i.e. DBS information, disciplinary, dismissal, etc). Whilst the Head of Provision may only be able to share some, but not all details, their advice will be highlighting the risks which will need to be considered before providing a personal reference.

If a staff member chooses to provide a personal reference to a person they know was dismissed from their job at the ALP, the ALP will not be able to provide support in any legal proceedings taken by third parties.

