

International  
Schools  
Partnership

# Safer Recruitment FAQs

 **iSP**

# Safer Recruitment Frequently Asked Questions

## HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

All ISP schools and individuals who work with children and young people, or who are involved in providing services to them within schools, have a duty to safeguard and promote their welfare. The adoption of safe recruitment practices and procedures is vital in identifying, deterring, and rejecting people unsuitable for working with children.

In this document we explore 'Frequently Asked Questions' that will help you in your decision-making process, empower you with knowledge and build on best practice.

## REFERENCES & SEARCHES

1. Do I need to obtain a reference to cover a gap in a candidate's CV?

**Yes.** A gap in a candidate's CV could be due to illness, a period of unemployment, travelling or looking after a family member. In situations like this, you can request a character reference. We do not need to delve into someone's personal life, but we do need an affirmation as to their character and confirmation that they were not working and were resident in the country they have told us they were resident in. This person must not be a family member, must have known the person for at least two years (and must have known them for at least the duration of the gap). The reference should be from someone in a professional role e.g. a lawyer, teacher, accountant, doctor etc. and from a professional email address.

2. Do I still need to obtain a second reference, from a previous employer, if a person has worked with the same organisation for a long period of time? For example, more than 5 years?

**Yes.** References are needed to from a person's current employer and a previous employer even if they have been with their current employer for long time. If they've only ever worked for one employer, we can accept two references from different people at that employer (e.g. different line managers) but it is also good practice to request a further character or education reference.

3. Can I accept a reference that is titled 'To whom it may concern'?

**No.** References must be personally addressed and sent from a professional email address (i.e not Gmail/ Hotmail etc).

4. How do I obtain references for a candidate who has been self-employed/ working as a consultant?

You should request details of clients and seek references from them. If the work has been very short-term, ask for a number of clients to build up a picture. References must be sent from a professional email address.

5. Can I make a conditional offer if I haven't received both references?  
**Yes.** However, it is imperative to make sure candidates are made aware in writing that any offer is conditional to satisfactory references and criminal background / police checks. Early references are encouraged to help make good hiring decisions as any questions can be raised during the interview process.
6. Our school runs a summer camp programme and we need to recruit short term staff who are only needed for several weeks- do I still need to complete references?  
**Yes.** No matter how short the contract, full references must be sought for any new member of staff and added to the Single Central Register.
7. What if the summer camp role is the first paid employment for a school leaver candidate?  
**Yes.** References are still needed and successful candidates can be asked to bring references on their first day. These can be from school (good behaviour report) as well as character reference perhaps from a neighbour, voluntary association, church group or sports club. You will also still need a criminal background check / police check for their home country and depending on their age you may need parental consent for this.
8. We have a group of parents who read with children once a week- do we need to conduct references and police checks for them?  
**Yes.** Full checks are needed for anybody coming into contact with children on a regular basis.
9. Do I conduct online searches for all candidates?  
**No.** Online searches are only to be conducted on short-listed candidates.
10. Do online searches breach data security?  
**No.** You are only searching for information that has been made publicly and freely online. You only need to look for and share information with the interview panel that is relevant to the role and someone's suitability to work with children.
11. What are some examples of red flags on references?  
 Evidence of misconduct or poor/questionable behaviour, unreliability, poor performance or lack of judgement, ticking 'would not rehire' on the reference, being untruthful about who the line manager is or the position of the referee, dates on reference not matching dates on CV, to name but a few...

## POLICE CHECKS

1. Where can I find useful resources about police checks and criminal background checks?  
 The UK and Canada offer accurate guidance, links are found below:

- UK Guidance (countries A-F)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/countries-a-to-f-applying-for-a-criminal-records-check-for-someone-from-overseas>
- UK Guidance (countries G-P)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/countries-g-to-p-applying-for-a-criminal-records-check-for-someone-from-overseas>
- UK Guidance (countries Q-Z)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants/countries-q-z>
- Canada guidance – how to get a police certificate  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/application/medical-police/police-certificates/how.html>

**International schools should be asking any potential employee who has lived or worked in the UK to obtain an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) not a DBS check.** This can be obtained from this website <https://www.acro.police.uk/s/> but it's important that it is the International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) that is requested - *not the Police Certificate*.

2. A candidate has lived in a country for only 6 months- do they need to provide a police check for this?

**Yes.** For any country where a candidate has lived for 6 months or longer in the past ten years a police check is required.

3. I have not received all the police checks or references yet- can a new member of staff commence employment?  
It is imperative that timing is allocated to obtaining all the necessary checks and references before employment can commence. However, in the absence of a missing check (criminal background/police or references), a Safer Recruitment Risk Assessment can be completed. Remember that when submitting a request for a Risk Assessment to be approved, you are recommending that the new member of staff is safe to start. It is therefore expected that you will have sufficient evidence already (in terms of checks / references received) to make this recommendation. You should complete the Risk Assessment in as much detail as possible and submit it with accompanying documentation. Only when the Risk Assessment has been given final approval can an employee start. The Risk Assessment does not override missing checks and references, these must still be sought and provided as soon as possible.
4. I have received a screenshot of an online criminal background /police check. Is this acceptable?  
**Yes.** However, the certificate must make clear reference to the candidate's name or identity/ passport number.
5. What if a candidate cannot afford a criminal background / police check?

Criminal background / police checks are an ISP requirement and are non-negotiable. At Group level, the costs of all checks are covered directly by ISP. For schools, police checks are reimbursed upon arrival. If there is financial difficulty, it is recommended that the school cover costs to ensure efficiency and overall enjoyment of the onboarding process.

6. On an ICPC, what is the difference between 'no live trace' and 'no trace'?  
 'No trace' means that a person has no convictions, reprimands, final warnings or cautions on record. 'No live trace' means that there is criminal record information held for that person but it has been 'stepped down'. In this case, refer to the application form/ interview notes and see if this has been initially disclosed. If nothing has been disclosed, ask the candidate if there is anything from their past (a conviction or reprimand) that will have shown up on the ICPC. Any disclosed information should then be shared and discussed with your Regional Head of HR.

## ONLINE SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

1. Can a new staff member commence employment without completing the 'Safeguarding Essentials' training?  
**No.** All new staff must complete the Safeguarding Essentials training before commencing in their new role.
2. Does the 'Safeguarding Essentials' training need to be completed annually?  
 The Safeguarding Essentials training doesn't need completing annually. In schools, DSLs will provide annual safeguarding training and all regional office staff must complete Safeguarding Refresher on the Learning Hub. This will be logged in the Single Central Register.
3. Who needs to complete the 'Safer Recruitment' online training?  
 All HR staff and any hiring managers or other members of staff who will be involved in recruitment or sit on any potential interview panels will need to complete the 'Safer Recruitment' training in the Learning Hub.

## SAFER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

1. I am working on a complex case and unsure of the next steps in the safer recruitment process, who should I contact?  
 In the first instance, your Regional Head of HR should be contacted who will advise. In some cases, information will need to be shared with and checked by both Group HR and Safeguarding Team.
2. What are the basic requirements of an interview panel?  
 All members of the panel must have completed the 'Safer Recruitment' online training in the Learning Hub. Any confirmed interview panel is expected to meet ahead of any interviews to discuss a candidate's experience, potential questions and any information that has come to light from the application form and/or references.

3. Who is responsible for completing the SRRA?  
School HR are responsible for completing the risk assessment in as much detail as possible. This includes details of measures that the school will put in place to ensure the member of staff is to be managed and monitored safely until they become fully compliant. This is then shared with the Regional Head of HR for review.  
Please refer to sample Risk Assessment in the Safer Recruitment Toolkit for guidance on how to accurately complete this form. New starters cannot join until final approval has been given.
4. What is the difference between a risk assessment and a CBC/ Police Check exemption form?  
A risk assessment should only be completed and submitted for approval when you have completed and received as many checks as possible in the circumstances – for example, you have a criminal background / police check for the current country of residence and a full set of references but there is a delay in obtaining the background / police check from a previous country of residence.  
In some cases, candidates will not be able to apply for and obtain a police check if they have already left the country in question. In this case, a CBC/ Police Check exemption form must be completed.
5. Do I need to sign and date all documents?  
**Yes.** Upon successful recruitment of a new member of staff, all documents and paperwork (certificates, passports etc) that has been checked need to be signed and dated then added to the HR file in the correct order.
6. Do contractors and consultants need to be added to the SCR?  
All contractors and consultants who work directly on site in schools must be added to the SCR with the relevant checks carried out. This includes but not limited to kitchen staff, security guards, construction workers, education consultants and those involved in after school activities who will be spending prolonged periods of time on campus and may come into contact with children or young adults.

If ISP has a contract with an individual (as opposed to an organisation who supplies individuals) we must carry out the safer recruitment process and add those individuals to the SCR even if that individual works for an umbrella organisation or their own / another limited company.

For companies who are subcontracted to provide a regular service in school we can use the 'Third Party Employee Checks Template'. This is only for people ISP don't employ or contract with directly but who we need to have had appropriate checks and references and added to the SCR.



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