Academic Guardians UK

Safer Recruiting Policy

This policy summarises Academic Guardians UK current working practices in relation to context of Safer Recruitment of staff, homestay hosts, volunteers and drivers.

The policy is linked to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. Safer Recruitment should be seen as part of our existing safeguarding framework and responsibilities.

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Policy owner	Updated	Review date
Andrew Kettle	August 2024	August 2025

Academic Guardians UK Ltd – Safer Recruitment Policy

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Policy Owner:	Andrew Kettle (Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead)	Update: August 2024
Next Review Date:	August 2025	

1. Safer Recruitment

1.1 Safer recruitment of staff members (including Local Co-ordinators and Host Family Inspectors) and partners (host families and travel companies), is aligned to the Department for Children, Schools and Families 'Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education' (2012).

1.2 The document sets out the highest standards of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and recruitment best practice (some areas underpinned by legislation) for schools, local authorities and further education sectors. The guidance contained within this document is relevant for Academic Guardians UKs who are responsible for children (under 18's) and who work in partnership with schools, colleges and universities.

1.3 Academic Guardians UKs has a policy and process document for staff, travel companies and homestay host families which are designed to maximise the safeguarding and welfare of our students according to the role being performed.

2. Safer Recruitment for Staff Members

2.1 The recruitment of staff in accordance with the principles of Safer Recruitment ensures that employees are recruited in an effective and secure way and is designed to deter candidates who would be unsuitable to work with children.

2.2 The process

- Ensure that the details of the post make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- Provide a job description, statement of services that clearly states the main duties and responsibilities of the post and the individual's responsibility for data protection and for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children in AGUK care.
- Provide a person specification that describes the competences and qualities that the applicant should have in addition to qualifications and experience relevant to the post
- Ensure that the application form states that the successful applicant will be required to provide an enhanced DBS disclosure. All positions are subject to enhanced DBS checks. (AGUK will apply for enhanced DBS disclosure checks including barred list information for applicants who will be taking part in regulated activity.)
- Where a DBS check from a previous employer is being accepted, but has not yet arrived, it will be necessary to carry out a barred list check on the member of staff before they are allowed to start work and engage in any regulated activity.
- Use a CV and application form to obtain a common set of data from all candidates

- Scrutinise the applicant's employment record looking for any gaps in employment, anomalies or discrepancies and question these should the applicant be invited to attend for interview
- Obtain at least two references, one must be a professional reference, that answer specific questions, which assess the applicant's suitability to work with children. Request the return of the declaration form from each referee, signed and dated. References must be specific to the applicant and to the post applied for
- Check previous employment history and experience – telephone previous employer/s to check authenticity of information
- Organise and conduct face to face interviews with suitable applicants for the post
- Ensure that a part of the interview includes an assessment of the candidates understanding of safeguarding issues
- Check the applicant's identity and right to work in the UK and keep a record of this. In line with the AGUK Data Protection Policy, AGUK will not keep copies of these documents beyond the need to complete the necessary checks and verification process.
- Verify the successful candidate's qualifications, academic and vocational, as claimed on the application form
- Verify that the successful candidate has the health and physical capacity to carry out the responsibilities of the post. All applicants should sign a declaration that they are mentally and physically fit to undertake the role in question
- Carry out further checks on those who have lived overseas if a DBS enhanced disclosure is insufficient to establish the successful candidate's suitability to work with children
- State clearly verbally, and in writing that any offer made is subject to satisfactory references, medical fitness and enhanced DBS check
- Keep a central register of appointments, which includes the checks made in respect of permanent fulltime and part-time, peripatetic and supply staff. (Identity, DBS and barred list information, qualifications, right to work in the UK, references and medical fitness – in line with current regulations.) The central register includes all staff, local co-ordinators, homestay host families, drivers and volunteers who have direct contact with the pupils.

3. Safer Recruitment for Academic Guardians UK Homestay Host Families

3.1 Academic Guardians UK has a clear procedure for the safer recruitment of Homestay Host Families who care for students for periods of less than 28 days, for example during half terms, exeat weekends, periods of sickness or other occasions when the school is closed.

3.2 The Safer Recruitment Policy outlines the processes which ensure the highest level of safeguarding is afforded to our students while staying with a host family.

3.3 Safer Recruitment influences the process from planning and point of advertising to post induction of a new host family, including on-going monitoring through the initial, revisit and spot check process:

- AGUK will only use homestay hosts with a current enhanced DBS certificate, on all adults and children within the household aged 16 and above.
- AGUK will evaluate information about any homestay host family criminal record and make sensible, fair and consistent judgements about whether the individual is safe to engage (or remain engaged) in the employment role, office or voluntary activity.
- A social services background check will also be requested for individuals after completing an application form & signing the appropriate authorisation form. AGUK will evaluate information about the staff social services record and make sensible, fair and consistent judgements about whether the individual(s) is/are safe to engage as a host family.
- On receipt of the signed application form both personal and professional references will be sought by AGUK.
- On receiving positive references and a signed background check authorisation form and after a telephone conversation with both referees, AGUK will then apply for a social service check on the main carers in the household. A decision will be necessary as to ascertain if the host family will be suitable.
- A homestay visit will be arranged by a member of the AGUK team. This visit will be used to carry out a risk assessment of the property, review any current DBS certificates and to speak to the family about caring for an international student in their home and to answer any questions on our child protection policy and to give details of how to contact the Safeguarding team.
- During the visit an assessment will be made on the health wellbeing of the family in relation to the suitability to host. This information will be recorded in the visit report.
- Should the host family not have a current Enhanced DBS certificate for all members of the household aged over 16, an Enhanced DBS for everyone will be applied for by Academic Guardians.
- A further fair & consistent decision will be made based on the information provided by the Enhanced DBS.

- Further to consistent positive information being received a Homestay Host Handbook will be issued to the homestay host family and details of their first student placement will be arranged.

- The homestay host will be offered opportunities for engaging with safeguarding training as well as being informed of Safeguarding updates and changes through periodic communications and their annual visit.

- From June 2022 homestay hosts will be required to complete a certified Introduction to Safeguarding course orevidence existing valid training on this topic, prior to hosting

- A single central record will be maintained detailing the nature and dates of checks undertaken. The information with be stored in the Homestay Information Monitoring spreadsheet (HIMS).

4. Safer Recruitment of Transfer Companies

4.1 Academic Guardians UKs follow a clear procedure for the safer recruitment of transfer companies and taxi drivers. The procedure outlines the requirements for accrediting a new transfer company and for the on-going monitoring of the companies.

- Where possible AGUK will only use school approved transport providers

- Where AGUK contracted drivers are required, they will be asked to complete a service delivery contract where it is a requirement to produce evidence of their current professional licence. Identification documents include

  - Valid DBS
  - Drivers Licence
  - Passport
  - Valid PSO Licence (Private Hire Licence)
  - Proof of address
  - Particulars of Vehicle

- Contracted drivers are also expected to adhere to AGUK policies and have an understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and are required to attend AGUK annual training days.

- In line with the AGUK Data Protection Policy, AGUK will not keep copies of these documents beyond the need to complete the necessary checks and verification process.

4.2 Academic Guardians UKs has clear procedures for transport and travel arrangements which ensures that our internal processes afford the highest levels of safeguarding to our students. The procedures

outline the processes for booking transfers, sending taxi requests and confirmations to guarantee that students are safely transported to and from their destinations.

4.3 There are clear procedures for students during a transfer (including shared journeys and ad hocs), including safeguarding a student at the airport (escort to terminal, unaccompanied minors, and Airport Angels).

5. Other relevant legislation, guidance and codes of practice

- Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges on Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, Department for Education, 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016 - 2022
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018