

## Child Safe Standard 4

### St Albans Primary School Recruitment Procedures

#### Rationale

The child safe standards require SAPS to have recruitment and screening practices that reduce the risk of child abuse. The documents outline the recruitment practices that help to protect children from abuse.

Robust recruitment processes help ensure the best applicants are employed. From advertising through to conducting interviews and checking the background of applicants, it is important that each step is done consistently and thoroughly.

#### Selection Criteria

Developing appropriate selection criteria for the position is a valuable first step to reducing the risk of appointing someone who poses a child safety risk. It will also ensure that applicants have specific knowledge and skills required for the position.

Remember to ensure your selection criteria provides for the safety for all children. Your applicants should have the opportunity to indicate their understanding of, or any experience they have in working with children with diverse needs and/or backgrounds. The selection criteria will clearly state the following:

'Must have experience working with children' statement	
'Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of appropriate behaviours when engaging with children' statement	
The experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant	
Outline the supervision and accountability processes in place which support child safety	
Include a demonstration of the needs of children with a disability	
Include a demonstration of Aboriginal cultural safety and awareness	
Include a demonstration of cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.	

#### Advertising

Planning your advertisement and its placement provides a good opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to safeguarding children and deter would-be offenders. Your advertisement will:

Include a message about your organisation's commitment to child safety.	
Include a reference to your code of conduct and child safety policy.	
Inform applicants that appropriate rigorous reference and background checking will be undertaken, including a Working with Children Check and police record and identity check.	
<p>Include the following statements in the advertisement</p> <p>This organisation promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all children, including those with a disability</p> <p>This organisation promotes the safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal children, and encourages applications from Aboriginal peoples.</p> <p>This organisation promotes the safety and wellbeing of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and encourages applications from people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>	

## Working with Children Check

Under the Working with Children Act 2005, people who are doing child-related work, and who are not exempt, need a working with Children Check. Full details of the Working with Check process can be found on the Working with Children website [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au).

Does the applicant hold a valid Working with Children Check?	
Have you <u>checked the validity of their working with Children Check</u> ?	
If the applicant does not hold a valid Working with Children Check, and it is required, has the applicant provided evidence that they have applied for a Working with Children Check, and does your organisation have processes to follow up pending applications?	
Has the applicant provided you with evidence of their Working with Children Check, and or evidence of their application for a Working with Children Check?	

## Referee Checks

The panel will contact at least two referees as this can provide insight into the applicant's character and skills. The most recent people that the person has worked with, and the ones likely to provide you with the most accurate reference. Where possible, referees that can provide insights into the applicants experience working with children should be contacted.

Do the referees provided by the applicants include, Principals, Assistant Principals, and Leading Teachers who can be objective, rather than colleagues or friends?	
Has the applicant provided their most recent Principal, Assistant Principal as a referee? If not, have they provided you with a satisfactory reason?	
Have you spoken to at least two of the referees by telephone? Did you confirm with them their name and position provided to you by the applicant?	

When speaking with the referees, you should seek to establish the referee's relationship with the applicant, including:

How long the applicant and referee worked together?	
The specifics of the position	
The applicants perceived strengths and weaknesses.	
Whether the referee would hire the person again, particularly in a role with children?	
Whether they have any concerns about the applicant working with children?	

You should ask referees directly about any concerns you may have about the applicant working with children. To help introduce this difficult topic, you could say you have some specific questions about child safety because your organisation takes child safety seriously.

Take note of any pauses or gaps in the referee's responses.

Ask behaviour-based questions like:

What did the applicant do when...(For example, they had to comfort a distressed child)?	
Do you have any concerns about the applicant's attitude towards Aboriginal peoples / people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds / people with a disability?	

## Interviews

The interview process is a very important step in selecting the right people for our school and identifying any people who may pose a risk to children. Sufficient time must be given to plan and prepare for the interview process, and form an interview panel with the right mix of experience and skill to carry out the interview, ensuring that all panel members are clear on what the position requires. We will include Aboriginal peoples, people from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background and people with a disability on the interview panel.

Including open-ended, behavioural-based questioning (see below) will give us insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. Some useful questions may include:

'Tell us about why you want to work with children?'	
'Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging'	
'Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child'	

Take notice of your own thoughts and feelings when interacting with the applicant. Ask for more information if the applicant does not provide sufficient information in his or her responses.

Did you notice any warning signs such as:

Unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history	
The applicant says that they do not value or 'need' supervision	
The applicant is evasive or inconsistent in his or her answers	

## Pre-employment Screening

Screening applicants, is a good tool for helping to prevent people who may abuse children from entering your organisation.

### Police Checks

It is important to be upfront and ask the applicant if they have criminal convictions, formal disciplinary action taken against them, or any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct. This could involve the applicant signing a declaration as part of an application form.

<http://www.police.vic.gov.au/content.asp?Document ID=274>

You could also cover this in a face-to-face interview. This may be challenging for the interview panel, particularly if the person is already known to you, but the applicant's response should demonstrate a sufficient level of professionalism as well as an understanding of your obligations. To help introduce the difficult topic, you could say to the applicant that you have some specific questions about child safety because your organisation takes child safety seriously.

Have you included a question about whether the applicant has any criminal convictions, cautions, other legal or pending cases, including formal disciplinary action, which may affect their suitability to work with children?	
If addressed during a face-to-face interview, did you take notice of how the applicant responds to questions with regard to his or her words and body language?	
Have you undertaken a police record check (which includes identity check)?	
Did you have any concerns about the applicant working with children?	
Would you employ this person again?	

### Additional Checks

Additional checks will confirm the identity of the applicant and that their responses have been truthful.

Have you checked the identity of the applicant (for example, that their driver's licence/passport has the same name they have provided you)?	
Did you see a certified copy of the applicant's qualifications (if required)?	

### **Probation Periods**

Probation periods can help you assess a new staff member's performance and suitability for the job before confirming their permanent employment. If you have any concerns about the person working with children, you should seriously consider whether you want them to remain in the job and your organisation.

The length of probation periods can vary and are usually between three and six months.

You should consider whether the person should receive closer supervision and additional training throughout the probation period. A probation period can offer an opportunity to set goals with new staff members and identify training, supervision and other support needs.

### **Regular Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal communities, cultural and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

This Code of Conduct was ratified by the St Albans Primary School Council on 17/08/2016