



Total Tutoring Dorset Safer Recruitment Policy

- Approved by: Loren Tharme
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1. Introduction and Statement of Intent

Total Tutoring Dorset is an unregistered alternative provision provider committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We recognise that the safety and well-being of the children in our care is paramount. This Safer Recruitment Policy outlines the robust procedures we implement to ensure that all individuals appointed to work with children and young people are suitable and do not pose a risk. Our commitment extends to all staff, whether employed, self-employed, or volunteering, who will have unsupervised access to children as part of their role.

This policy has been developed in line with the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2024, published by the Department for Education. As an unregistered alternative provision, while not subject to the same registration requirements as schools, we are committed to adhering to the principles and practices of KCSIE 2024 to provide the highest level of safeguarding for our students. We understand that placing schools remain responsible for the safeguarding of pupils placed in alternative provision, and our policy supports this shared responsibility by ensuring rigorous safeguarding checks on our own staff.

The policy aims to deter, reject, or identify people who are unsuitable to work with children and young people. By implementing thorough and consistent recruitment practices, Total Tutoring Dorset ensures that our educational environment is safe, nurturing, and conducive to learning. This policy also supports our commitment to equality and diversity, ensuring fair recruitment practices that do not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

All staff involved in recruitment at Total Tutoring Dorset will receive appropriate training to ensure they understand their responsibilities in preventing unsuitable people from working with children.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all paid employees, self-employed tutors, contractors, and volunteers who work or seek to work at Total Tutoring Dorset. It covers all stages of the recruitment process, from advertising and shortlisting to interviews, pre-employment checks, and induction. The principles outlined herein apply irrespective of the nature of the engagement (full-time, part-time, temporary, permanent) or the duration of the role, whenever an individual will be engaging in regulated activity related to children.

Regulated activity, as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012), includes roles where individuals will be teaching, training, supervising, or caring for children, or providing advice or guidance to them, where that activity is unsupervised. For Total Tutoring Dorset, this primarily encompasses our tutoring staff and any administrative staff who may have direct, unsupervised contact with students.

3. Key Principles of Safer Recruitment

Our safer recruitment practices are underpinned by the following core principles, directly informed by KCSIE 2024:

- **Child-Centred Approach:** The welfare and safety of children and young people are at the forefront of all recruitment decisions.
- **Prevention:** To take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable individuals from working with children and young people.
- **Compliance with Legislation:** Adherence to all relevant employment legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR), and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.
- **Transparency and Fairness:** Ensuring that recruitment processes are fair, objective, and transparent for all applicants.
- **Thorough Vetting:** Conducting rigorous pre-employment checks to verify identity, qualifications, and suitability to work with children.
- **Consistency:** Applying consistent standards and procedures across all recruitment activities.
- **Accountability:** Ensuring clear roles and responsibilities for all staff involved in the recruitment process.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly reviewing and updating recruitment practices in light of new guidance, legislation, and best practice.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective safer recruitment is a shared responsibility within Total Tutoring Dorset. Key roles include:

- **The Proprietor/Director (or designated recruitment lead):** Overall responsibility for the implementation and oversight of this policy. Ensuring that all statutory and best practice guidance is followed and that adequate resources are allocated to safer recruitment.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** To advise on safeguarding aspects throughout the recruitment process, ensure safeguarding training is provided for new staff, and manage any safeguarding concerns arising during or after recruitment. The DSL will be involved in the interview process for roles involving regulated activity.
- **Recruiting Managers:** Responsible for following all stages of the recruitment process as outlined in this policy, including creating accurate job descriptions, shortlisting, conducting interviews, and ensuring all pre-employment checks are completed satisfactorily before an individual commences work.

All individuals involved in the recruitment and selection of staff will have undertaken appropriate safer recruitment training.

5. The Recruitment Process

Total Tutoring Dorset follows a structured multi-stage recruitment process to ensure the suitability of all prospective staff and volunteers.

5.1 Prior to Recruitment

Before any recruitment process commences, thorough planning ensures that roles are clearly defined and the commitment to safeguarding is explicit.

- **Job Description:** A detailed job description will be prepared for every role. This will clearly outline the duties and responsibilities, as well as the safeguarding responsibilities inherent in the position. It will specifically state the level of contact with children and any requirement to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.
- **Person Specification:** This document will identify the essential and desirable qualifications, experience, skills, and attributes required for the role. Crucially, it will include a clear statement about the candidate's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as an essential requirement.
- **Advertisements:** All recruitment advertisements will include a prominent statement regarding Total Tutoring Dorset's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and that the successful applicant will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check. An example statement is: "Total Tutoring Dorset is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this

commitment. This position is subject to an enhanced DBS check and satisfactory references."

- **Application Form:** Total Tutoring Dorset uses a standardised application form which requires candidates to:
 - Provide a full chronology of their employment history, including details of any gaps in employment and explanations for such gaps.
 - Declare any spent or unspent convictions, cautions, warnings, or reprimands.
 - Provide details of two professional referees, one of whom must be their current or most recent employer. Referees will be asked specifically about the candidate's suitability to work with children.

5.2 Shortlisting

Shortlisting will be conducted by at least two individuals who have completed safer recruitment training. The process involves:

- Careful scrutiny of application forms against the job description and person specification.
- Identifying any inconsistencies, anomalies, or unexplained gaps in employment history. These will be explored further during the interview stage.
- Assessing the candidate's declared commitment to safeguarding.

5.3 Interviews

All shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by a panel of at least two people, one of whom will have undertaken safer recruitment training. The interview process will:

- Include questions designed to assess the candidate's attitude towards safeguarding children and their understanding of child protection issues.
- Explore any inconsistencies or gaps identified in the application form.
- Allow the panel to assess the candidate's suitability to work with children, beyond just their professional competence.
- Explain the pre-employment checks that will be carried out.

5.4 Pre-Employment Checks (KCSIE 2024 Compliance)

No individual will commence work at Total Tutoring Dorset until all necessary pre-employment checks have been completed satisfactorily. These checks are rigorous and align with KCSIE 2024 requirements for those in regulated activity:

- **Identity Verification:** Production of original photographic ID (e.g., passport, driving licence) and proof of address.
- **Right to Work in the UK:** Verification of legal entitlement to work in the United Kingdom.
- **Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check:** An Enhanced DBS check, including a barred list check for individuals engaging in regulated activity. This check reveals spent and unspent convictions, cautions, warnings, and

allows for checking against the children's barred list. For tutors and other staff working directly with children, this is a mandatory requirement.

- **Prohibition from Teaching Check (if applicable):** For individuals who have previously held positions that required qualified teacher status, a check will be made to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching.
- **Overseas Criminal Record Checks:** Where an individual has lived or worked outside the UK, especially in the last 5 years, appropriate overseas criminal record checks will be obtained in addition to an Enhanced DBS check. This is crucial for verifying their suitability.
- **References:** A minimum of two satisfactory professional references will be obtained directly from previous employers. References will specifically be sought to verify employment history, professional competence, and, critically, suitability to work with children, including any safeguarding concerns or disciplinary actions related to safeguarding. References will be taken up before interview, where possible, and any discrepancies will be discussed with the candidate.
- **Verification of Qualifications:** Original certificates of relevant academic and professional qualifications will be sighted and verified.
- **Health Questionnaire/Declaration:** Candidates will be required to complete a health declaration to ensure they are medically fit to perform the duties of the role and to identify any reasonable adjustments that may be required.
- **Online Searches:** In line with KCSIE 2024, for all shortlisted candidates, an online search will be conducted (e.g., via social media and publicly available information) as part of the due diligence. This is to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the provider might want to explore with the applicant at interview. This check will be conducted by at least two individuals and documented. Any information found will be discussed with the candidate.
- **Childcare Disqualification Regulations:** For roles in early years provision (up to reception age) or relevant childcare roles for children aged up to 8, a check will be made to ensure the individual is not disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification Regulations 2018.

Any offer of employment will be conditional upon the satisfactory completion of all the above checks.

6. Induction and Ongoing Training

Safer recruitment does not end once an individual is appointed. A comprehensive induction and ongoing training programme are crucial elements of our safeguarding framework.

- **Induction:** All new staff and volunteers will undergo a structured induction programme which includes a thorough overview of Total Tutoring Dorset's safeguarding policies and procedures, including this Safer Recruitment Policy, our Child Protection Policy, and our Staff Code of Conduct. They will be informed

about the identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and how to report any concerns.

- **Initial Safeguarding Training:** New staff will receive essential safeguarding and child protection training within their first week of employment or commencement of duties. This training will cover recognition of signs of abuse, how to respond to disclosures, and reporting procedures.
- **Code of Conduct:** All staff and volunteers must read and sign a copy of Total Tutoring Dorset's Staff Code of Conduct, which clearly outlines expected professional boundaries and behaviours towards children and young people.
- **Ongoing Professional Development:** Regular safeguarding training will be provided to all staff at least annually, or more frequently if there are significant changes to statutory guidance (such as updates to KCSIE). This ensures that staff remain up-to-date with best practice and legislative changes regarding child protection.
- **Supervision and Support:** New staff, particularly those new to working in an educational setting or with vulnerable children, will receive appropriate supervision and support to help them understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

7. Managing Allegations and Concerns

Total Tutoring Dorset has clear procedures for managing allegations or concerns about staff conduct, whether relating to safeguarding or professional behaviour. These procedures are detailed in our separate Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct, but key aspects are relevant to the overarching safer recruitment framework:

- **Reporting Concerns:** All staff and volunteers are made aware of their responsibility to report any concerns about a colleague's conduct or suitability to work with children to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Proprietor/Director, even if the concern seems minor.
- **Low-Level Concerns:** In line with KCSIE 2024, Total Tutoring Dorset is committed to addressing "low-level concerns" – behaviour towards a child that does not meet the threshold of harm but could indicate a safeguarding risk or a breach of professional boundaries. These concerns will be recorded, addressed, and reviewed to ensure no pattern of inappropriate behaviour emerges.
- **Referral to LADO:** Any allegation that an individual who works with children has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or has possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, will be reported immediately to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- **Suspension:** Consideration will be given to suspending an individual from working directly with children whilst an allegation is being investigated, where such a step is deemed necessary to protect children.

- **Confidentiality:** All allegations will be handled with the utmost confidentiality, only sharing information on a 'need to know' basis to protect the integrity of the investigation and the privacy of all involved.

The Proprietor/Director and DSL will ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures and feel confident in raising concerns without fear of reprisal.

8. Record Keeping

Total Tutoring Dorset maintains comprehensive and secure records of all recruitment and vetting checks. This is essential for demonstrating compliance with statutory requirements and for audit purposes.

- **Personnel Files:** A confidential personnel file will be maintained for every staff member and volunteer. This file will contain:
 - The application form and shortlisting documentation.
 - Interview notes.
 - Identity verification documents.
 - Right to work documentation.
 - Enhanced DBS certificate number and date of issue (or copy if required by DBS guidelines for specific roles). The DBS check result will be recorded, but the certificate itself will not be retained if not legally required to do so, in line with DBS guidance.
 - Records of any overseas checks.
 - Copies of qualification certificates.
 - References received, including confirmation that questions about suitability to work with children and any disciplinary history were specifically asked.
 - Health declarations.
 - Signed Code of Conduct.
 - Record of safer recruitment training undertaken by the applicant and by those involved in their recruitment.
 - Documentation of any online searches conducted for shortlisted candidates, including what was searched, when, by whom, and any information found and discussed.
- **Retention of Records:** Recruitment records will be retained for a minimum of 6 years from the date of cessation of employment, or longer if required by specific circumstances or legal advice.
- **Data Protection and Confidentiality:** All personal data collected during the recruitment process will be handled in strict accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information will be stored securely, accessed only by authorised personnel, and used solely for the purposes for which it was collected.

9. Policy Review and Monitoring

This Safer Recruitment Policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are any changes to relevant legislation, statutory guidance (such as updates to KCSIE), or best practice recommendations. The review will ensure the policy remains effective and compliant.

Any revisions to the policy will be communicated to all staff and relevant stakeholders.

Total Tutoring Dorset is committed to a culture of continuous improvement in safeguarding. We will monitor the effectiveness of our recruitment procedures through:

- Regular audits of recruitment files to ensure compliance.
- Feedback mechanisms for staff and students regarding safeguarding practices.
- Maintaining up-to-date knowledge of national and local safeguarding developments.

The Proprietor/Director will be responsible for overseeing the annual review process and ensuring that any necessary amendments are made and implemented.

10. Definitions and Abbreviations

For clarity, the following terms and abbreviations are used within this policy:

- **Alternative Provision (AP):** Education provided to pupils who, for a variety of reasons, cannot attend a mainstream or special school.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The person responsible for leading on safeguarding and child protection within Total Tutoring Dorset.
- **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):** A non-departmental public body that helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.
- **Enhanced DBS Check:** The highest level of DBS check, revealing spent and unspent convictions, cautions, warnings, and allows for checking against the children's barred list.
- **KCSIE:** Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The 2024 version is the current applicable guidance.
- **LADO:** Local Authority Designated Officer. Responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children.
- **Regulated Activity:** Work with children that requires an Enhanced DBS check with a barred list check. This includes teaching, training, supervising, or caring for children, or providing advice or guidance to them.

11. Related Policies and Documents

This Safer Recruitment Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Total Tutoring Dorset policies and documents:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy (GDPR)
- Equality and Diversity Policy

12. Commitment to a Safe Culture

Total Tutoring Dorset is committed to fostering an open and vigilant culture where safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We believe that robust safer recruitment practices are foundational to creating an environment where children can learn and thrive without fear of harm. Our dedication to implementing and continually reviewing this policy reflects our unwavering commitment to the safety and welfare of every child entrusted to our care.

By ensuring that only suitable individuals are employed to work with our students, Total Tutoring Dorset aims to provide a high-quality educational experience within a secure and protective framework, aligning with the highest standards of child safeguarding as outlined in KCSIE 2024 and beyond.