**Stamford Park Trust Online Search Protocols and Process**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The 2022 version of Keeping Children Safe (KCSIE) recommends that schools and colleges should consider carrying out online searches on all shortlisted candidates. Paragraph 220 of the [guidance](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1077101/KCSIE_2022.pdf) has introduced guidance for schools and colleges to carry out an online search as part of the due diligence into shortlisted candidates. The full paragraph reads:

"In addition, as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview.”

Stamford Park Trust believes that having a robust recruitment and selection process is crucial to the successful operation of our organisation and enables us to attract and retain excellent people and fulfil our safeguarding obligations.

These protocols and process provide transparency and fairness for all applicants regarding how Stamford Park Trust will abide by the KCSIE guidance.

# 2. POLICY STATEMENT

## 2.1 Trust Commitment

As part of the online due diligence process the Trust will ensure any information found as part of the search will not be used unlawfully to discriminate against candidates. W**e** will review any information found, consider its relevance and impact, and invite the candidate to address any identified issues.

## 2.2 The Process

Shortlisted candidates will be informed when they are invited to interview that the shortlisting process will include an online search as part of the Trust’s due diligence on all shortlisted candidates. Candidates will be asked to provide their social media handles. This may identify any incidents or expressed views that are publicly available online, which the Trust might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

**2.3 Purpose of the search**

The purpose of the search is to respond to enhanced safeguarding measures in KCSIE and to protect the Trust's reputation. The search will focus on any incidents of inappropriate or offensive behaviour, discrimination, drug or alcohol misuse, inappropriate images or videos and anything else that would question the candidate’s suitability to work with children or young people.

**2.4 Who will conduct the online search?**

A member of the Human Resources Department will carry out a search for shortlisted candidates per advertised vacancy. Searches will be carried out by someone unconnected to the recruitment process to reduce the risk of discrimination. Searches will not be carried out on current members of staff, unless they apply for a position within the Trust. HR will update the Trust Recruitment Checklist to confirm that the online search has taken place.

**2.5 How to use the information found?**

Following the search, the individual who carried out the check will then pass on only the relevant information they found to the HR recruitment team for advice and guidance, withholding irrelevant information relating to protected characteristics. The proforma (as outlined in Appendix A) must be completed by the individual who carried out the search.

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The proforma will be used to form the basis of a conversation with the candidate. Consideration will be given to the relevance and impact of any information found. The candidate will be invited to address any identified issues.

**2.6 How far back to check?**

Searches may cover up to 5 years.

**2.7 Which sites will be checked?**

For clarity and consistency in the first instance the below sites will be checked, however, depending on the search results, other social media sites or platforms may also be checked. The list of social media platforms will be reviewed and updated annually if applicable.

* + Google search
	+ Facebook (Meta)
	+ Twitter
	+ Instagram

## 2.8 Candidate Rights

Candidates will be given the opportunity to address any concerns and will be invited to discuss any identified issues. The Trust has a responsibility to satisfy itself that candidates are suitable for employment with children and young people and that their actions will not damage the reputation of the Trust.

In addition, candidates are able to access all paperwork relating to their recruitment process in accordance with the Trust Data Protection Policy.

## 2.9 Retention of Data

Information found as a result of an online search will be held in accordance with the Trust’s Recruitment and Selection policy.

# 3 RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMPLIANCE

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for maintaining fair, consistent and objective procedures for matters relating to recruitment and selection for the Trust.

The Trust Head of HR will ensure that appropriate processes are followed and review the protocols and process annually in line with KCSIE, unless legislation or Trust practice requires changes to be made sooner.

# 4 COMPLAINTS

Complaints in relation to the policy should follow the Trust Complaints Policy.

**Appendix 1**

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| **Trust Online Search Proforma** |
| **Candidates Name:** | **Post Applied For:**  |
| **Name of person carrying out search:**  | **Date of Search:**  |
| **Social Media Sites checked:** Google searchFacebookInstagramTwitterLinkedin | **Information Found** |
| **HR Advice regarding the next stages:** |
| **Name:** | **Date:** |