

Recruitment, Selection and Vetting Policy

Step Teachers is a specialist education recruitment agency, providing teaching and support workers to client schools for long term, short term, day to say supply and permanent placements. The safety and welfare of children is always considered, and it is our policy to ensure that all relevant pre-registration checks are carried out by staff that are trained in procedure and understand their responsibilities.

We are committed to equal opportunities for all, in our recruitment practices and oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination, direct or indirect, irrespective of age, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital and civil partnerships, responsible for dependents, trade union membership or any other circumstances not relevant to the performance of a position.

Our vetting procedures are designed to surpass the requirements placed on us by the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 statutory guidance. We are members of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and adhere to their 'Code of Professional Practice'. We have held REC Audited Education accreditation since 2012 which replaced the DfE Quality Mark which we held since 2005. The REC Audited Education status verifies that our policies and procedures are in accordance with the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 and all safeguarding legislation.

All checks are completed prior to the first placement of a candidate and are repeated during service on a continuous basis to ensure suitability to work with children. All mention of 'candidate' in this policy includes teacher, support worker and tutor unless otherwise stated.

The following checks and training apply to all candidates who register with Step Teachers:

- Face to face interview
- Full cv
- Right to work checks
- ID check and proof of address
- References
- Signed Rehabilitation of Offenders Act Declaration
- Disclosure and Barring Service and Update Service checks
- Overseas police checks
- Letter of Professional Standing
- Qualifications
- Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) check
- Signed Health Declaration
- Signed Childcare Disqualification Declaration
- Online Search
- Proficiency of the English Language Assessment
- Read and sign 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Part 1
- Child Protection Training
- Prevent Duty Training
- GDPR Training

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- NTP Tutor Training (if applicable)

Face to Face Interview

Before placing a candidate on an assignment, Step Teachers meets with the candidate face to face or via a live video call. Before meeting the candidate, we ask them to forward a copy of their cv and advise them of the documentation they are required forward to us or to bring with them to the interview.

During the interview, a trained Resource Consultant will assess the candidate's suitability for the role by discussing their previous work history and qualifications. Step Teachers uses a template of standard relevant questions to ensure equality of approach and seek to understand the candidate's knowledge and understanding of protocols and to assess how they would react to various scenarios.

Provided the outcome of the interview is satisfactory, Step Teachers will then start the pre-employment checks.

CV

All candidates must provide us with a cv that details the last 10 years of employment and education history (if applicable). Dates of employment and education must include the start and end date as well as the month and year of their previous and current employment and education.

This is to ensure that any gaps in employment are clearly identified. Any gaps of 3 months or more are discussed with the candidate and recorded on the candidate's electronic file. The information provided on the cv is crossed checked with the information provided on the candidate's application form, qualifications, and ID documents. Any discrepancies are discussed with the candidate.

Right to Work Checks

To comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and subsequent legislation as well as equality law, we abide by the Homes Offices' 'An employer's guide to right to work checks' (Oct 2023). We will conduct either a digital identity verification check, physical document check or an online check to establish a candidate's right to work.

Digital identity verification checks

For digital right to work checks we follow the process set out in the [Home Office Guidance: An Employer's guide to right to work checks](#):

- Step one:

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We use the services of an IDSP certified provider in respect of British and Irish citizens who hold a valid British or Irish passport. We will only employ the candidate, if the IDVT identity check output confirms the candidate's eligibility for right to work.

- Step two:

We satisfy ourselves that the photograph and biographic details (for e.g. date of birth) on the IDVT identity check output are of the candidate presenting themselves for work; and

- Step three:

We retain a clear copy of the IDVT identity check output provided by the IDSP (storing that response securely and electronically) for the duration of employment and for two years afterwards. The copies will then be securely destroyed.

Physical right to work checks

For physical document checks we follow the three-step process set out in the [Home Office Guidance: An Employer's guide to right to work checks](#):

- Step one:

We obtain the candidate's original documents. The candidate must provide us with either a document from [LIST A](#) or documents from [LIST B Group 1 or 2](#) of the Home Office lists of acceptable documents for manual right to work checks. We only accept original documents. Photocopies or electronic scans are not acceptable.

- Step two:

We take reasonable steps to check that the document is valid, and that the candidate is the person named in the document. For each document we complete the following checks:

- Check any photographs are consistent with the appearance of the candidate.
- Check any dates of birth listed are consistent across documents and that we are satisfied that these correspond with the appearance of the candidate.
- Check that the expiry date for permission to be in the UK has not passed.
- Check that the documents are valid and genuine, have not been tampered with and belong to the holder.
- If given two documents which have different names, we ask for a further document to explain the reason for this. This further document could be a marriage certificate, divorce decree absolute, a deed poll or statutory declaration.

- Step three

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We make a copy of the relevant page/s of the document in a format which cannot be subsequently altered. This can include a photocopy or scan or where we take an electronic copy, this will be in a non-rewritable format.

Where the candidate has provided us with a passport, we will photocopy or scan the following: any page with the document expiry date, the holder's nationality, date of birth, signature, leave expiry date, biometric details, photograph, and any page containing information indicating that the holder has an entitlement to enter or remain in the UK and undertake the work in question.

All copies of documents taken will be kept securely for the duration of the candidate's engagement with Step Teacher and for two years afterwards. They copy will then be securely destroyed.

Online right to work checks

For online right to work checks we follow the three basic steps set out in the [Home Office Guidance: An Employer's guide to right to work checks](#):

- Step one:

We use the Home Office online right to work checking service in respect of an individual candidate and will only employ the candidate, if the online check confirms they are entitled to do the work in question:

- Step two:

We satisfy ourselves that any photograph on the online right to work check is of the candidate presenting themselves for work; and

- Step three:

We retain a clear copy of the response provided by the online right to work check (storing that response securely and electronically) for the duration of employment and for two years afterwards. The copies will then be securely destroyed.

Candidates with a temporary right to work will have a follow-up right to work check conducted before the expiry of their current document. Electronic monitoring systems are in place to signal the pending expiry of these documents.

ID Checks and proof of address

In addition to the above right to work documents, we also require candidates to provide us with two additional documents to confirm their identity and proof of address. We follow the DBS ID guidance for acceptable ID documents. The type of documents that we accept are driving licence, birth certificate, utility bill, bank statement, amongst other documents.

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A full comprehensive list of acceptable DBS ID documents can be accessed [here](#).

Copies of documents will be taken and noted with the date the documents were checked and signed by the person who checked the documents. Copies will be kept securely and electronically for the duration of the candidate's engagement and for 2 years afterwards. The copies will then be securely destroyed.

References

In accordance with Regulation 22 of the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Employment Businesses Regulations 2003 and the terms of the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework, we require at least 2 references that must cover the previous two years of employment for all candidates. One of the references must be from their most recent employer and ideally, both who are able to comment directly on their performance in the education field. References must be from non-family members who give their consent for the reference to be forwarded to our clients.

References are sought and obtained directly from the referee. Referees must be people that are senior to the candidate and must be contactable at their place of work. Emailed references must be sent to professional email addresses and must be returned in this way.

In cases where the candidates most recent/currently employer is not a school, we require at least 1 other reference to be completed by a school the candidate last worked at.

We obtain references from other agencies where the agency is the most current employer or has been within the last 2 years to confirm dates of employment, position and safeguarding.

In cases where the candidate was the most senior person i.e., the Head Teacher, we will obtain a reference from the Chair of Governors or local authority, supported with a second reference from a colleague on the Senior Management Team to provide a more accurate portrayal of their classroom experience.

We require references to be in writing prior to placement, verbal references are not accepted.

We may ask for a character reference to support any gaps in employment and where the candidate is unable to provide us with a second professional reference. Character referees must work in a recognised professional (in line with the Passport Office's accepted countersignatory professions) and be able to receive and return the reference from their professional email address.

We may accept an open reference as long as we are able to obtain written verification from the referee and it includes the following information: dates of employment, the role the candidate undertook, the candidate was deemed suitable to work with children; the referee would re-employ the candidate and whether the candidate was subject to any disciplinary action and the circumstances, if any.

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Rehabilitation of Offenders Act Declaration

All candidates working with Step Teachers will bring them into close contact with pupils under the age of 18 or with students with learning difficulties or disabilities and therefore candidates are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and its supporting regulations and are required to disclose information about both spent and unspent convictions subject to the filtering rules.

All candidates are required to sign the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act declaration during the registration process and declare any convictions or cautions (excluding youth cautions, reprimands or warnings) that are not 'protected' as defined by the Ministry of Justice.

Disclosure and Barring Service and Update Service Checks

Step Teachers requires all our candidates to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which includes a check on the Children's Barred List.

We view and take a copy of the original DBS certificate and with the consent from the candidate, carry out a status check on the DBS Update Service. We record details of the check and the date the check is undertaken on the candidate's electronic file. If the Update Service check states that there is new information, we will require the candidate to apply for a new DBS certificate before proceeding with their registration.

If the candidate wishes to register with Step Teachers and they are not already on the Update Service, a new DBS check will be required, and we would encourage the candidate to subscribe to the Update Service. If they do not subscribe to the Update Service, we will require a new DBS check to be undertaken at least once a year or earlier if the candidate has a break in service of more than three months or if there are grounds for concern about the person's suitability to work with children.

Step Teachers will undertake repeat status checks on the Update Service at least once a year, or more often if required by our clients or if the candidate has a break in service of more than three months.

If a candidate has any convictions or cautions on their DBS certificate, Step Teachers will complete a risk assessment to determine whether to progress with their registration.

If the DBS certificate shows details of a conviction or caution, in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 2014, before a candidate starts a position in a school, we will securely provide the school with written notification of this as well as provide them with a copy of the candidate's DBS certificate, so that the school can confirm that they are willing to accept the candidate.

Following the decision of the Department for Education to remove access to the standalone Children's Barred List checking system for employment businesses from 1st April 2021, we cannot conduct this standalone check and we will not place any candidates in a role without a full enhanced DBS check being completed. This check includes a Barred List check.

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Overseas Police Checks

All candidates who have lived and worked in a single overseas country for a period of 6 months or more within the last 5 years must provide an overseas police check.

If the candidate is unable to provide a police check from the relevant country (for example, if the relevant country does not provide police checks), Step Teachers may accept a statement of good conduct from the candidate's previous employer within the relevant country. We would require the statement to include confirmation that, to the best of their knowledge, the candidate has no criminal convictions and that they know of no reason why the candidate should not work with children.

If we are unable to obtain a police check or a statement of good conduct, we will not proceed with the registration of the candidate.

Letter of Professional Standing

For candidates seeking teaching roles, that have lived or worked overseas in the last 5 years, Step Teachers will require a Letter of Professional Standing be issued by the professional regulatory authority where the individual worked. This check is completed to confirm the candidate's suitability for the role in line with Step Teachers obligations under the Conduct Regulations.

Where the letter cannot be obtained and all reasonable practice steps have been taken to obtain it, Step Teachers will require the candidate provide an alternative document which confirms their suitability for the role. This may be a letter of good standing from the Head Teacher in the school that they worked in or additional professional references. In such a case where the letter of professional standing cannot be obtained, Step Teachers may also refer to the Teacher Regulation Authority [Country of Evidence table](#) for guidance on what other document/s might confirm suitability.

Step Teacher will then inform the client of the steps taken to comply with the suitability requirements which are set out in Regulation 22 of the Conduct Regulations.

Qualifications

Where the client school, legislation or any professional body requires the candidate to have a particular qualification or authorisation to work in the position offered by the client school, we will obtain copies of original qualifications and authorisation, and these will be available to our client schools upon request.

Under the Education (School Teacher's Qualifications) (England) Regulations 2003, candidates being supplied into a teaching position must be qualified to teach. All our teacher candidate's must provide original evidence of their teaching qualification.

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Candidates who hold QTLS will need to provide their Level 5+ teaching qualification and QTLS award certificate. We will then verify their QTLS status via the Society for Education and Training (SET).

Other candidates such as Instructors and Support Staff will be asked to provide relevant qualifications if applicable.

Overseas trained teachers must provide us with their original overseas teaching qualification and a comparability certificate issued by the UK National Information Centre (UK ENIC).

Early Career Teachers (ECT's)

Wherever possible we will work with schools and ECT's to find suitable induction placements. In England, an ECT is required to complete 6 full school terms.

Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)

Step Teachers undertakes checks via the Teaching Regulation Agency Employer Access service, to check a teachers UK qualified teacher status to ensure that qualification certificates are genuine and that there are no prohibitions or sanctions imposed against the candidate. We retain a screen print on the teacher's file as a record of these checks. This check is undertaken on an annual basis or if there is more than a three month break in service.

Additionally, we undertake a check on all non-teaching candidates to ensure that there are no prohibitions or restrictions. A record of this check will be recorded on the candidate's electronic file. If a prohibitions or restrictions is imposed, we will retain a screen print and save it to the candidate's electronic file.

Referrals

Step Teachers as an employment business is a 'personnel supplier' and has a legal requirement under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 to refer information to the DBS about individuals who have either harmed, or placed at risk of harm, a child or vulnerable adult.

Where Step Teachers supplies or introduces a work seeker to a client school and the client school subsequently removes the candidate from carrying our 'regulated activity' because the client school believes that the person has engaged in 'relevant conduct' or the harm test' is satisfied, Step Teachers must provide information to the DBS about this matter. Additionally, if Step Teachers decides to withdraw our services from the candidate because we believe that the candidate engaged in 'relevant conduct' or that the 'harm test' is satisfied, we must provide information to the DBS about this.

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'Relevant conduct' is defined as:

- Conduct which endangers a child or vulnerable adult or is likely to endanger a child or vulnerable adult.
- Conduct which, if repeated against a child or vulnerable adult would endanger or would be likely to endanger him,
- Conduct involving sexual material relating to children (including possession of such material).
- Conduct involving sexually explicit images depicting violence against human beings.
- Conduct of a sexual nature involving a child or vulnerable adult.

Step Teachers has a duty to refer information to the DBS if the 'harm test' is satisfied, i.e. if Step Teachers thinks that the person may:

- Harm a child or vulnerable adult.
- Cause a child or vulnerable adult to be harmed.
- Put a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm.
- Attempt to harm a child or vulnerable adult.
- Incite another to harm a child or vulnerable adult

To ensure compliance with the DBS referral rules, we have processes in place to ensure that all staff are aware of the legal duty to make a DBS referral where necessary and know the process for doing so.

Health Declaration

To ensure compliance with the Education (Health Standards) (England) Regulations 2002, all candidates are required to complete a health declaration as part of the registration process to advise us of any health or disability issues that they believe are relevant to the role and which make it difficult for them to carry out functions that are essential to the role.

If a declaration is made, with consent from the candidate, we will obtain confirmation from the candidate's doctor that the candidate is fit to teach. If we are unable to obtain this confirmation we will not proceed with the registration.

If a teacher has been retired on medical grounds by the Department for Education after 1st April 1997, the teacher will not be able to teach as they have been considered medically unfit. However, if the retirement was before 1st April 1997, the teacher may be able to work if they can evidence that they have the health and physical capacity to teach. This can be achieved by obtaining confirmation, in writing from a GP. In these instances, they can only work a maximum of 2.5 days per week.

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Disqualification Declaration

All candidates are required as part of the registration process to read the relevant Department for Education's Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 statutory guidance 2018 and declare that they are not disqualified on any ground as set out in the guidance.

Candidates with any relevant offences/orders will not be permitted to register with Step Teachers to work with children under eight years unless they are in possession of an Ofsted Waiver.

Online Search

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance, we carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates. Searches will only be used to meet the intended purpose of Keeping Children Safe in Education and will not include irrelevant personal information, nor will any information be used to form an opinion of the candidate.

Searches will be carried out on publicly available information using the Google platform.

If a search identifies any relevant information that would make a candidate unsuitable to work with children, we will not proceed with the registration of the candidate.

Any data collected during the search will be retained in line with our Data Retention Policy, which is available on request.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

All candidates must read and sign during the registration process that they have read the Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 statutory guidance and every time that the guidance is updated.

Child Protection Training

All candidates must at time of registration either complete the free online Step Teachers Child Protection Training or have completed Child Protection Training within the last 2 years and provide us with evidence. All candidates must repeat this training every two years to ensure that their knowledge remains current.

Prevent Training

All candidates must at time of registration either complete the Home Office Prevent Training or have completed Prevent Training within the last 2 years and provide us with evidence. All candidates must repeat this training every two years to ensure that their knowledge remains current.

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GDPR Training

All candidates must at time of registration either complete the free online Step Teachers GDPR Training or have completed GDPR training within the last 2 years and provide us with evidence.

NTP Tutor Training

For those candidates who will be partaking in NTP Tutoring positions, they must at time of registration complete the NTP Tutor Training.

Complete/Incomplete Checks

We will only place a candidate with incomplete checks as a last resort, with the written permission of the school and for an agreed period. We will review the status of any outstanding documents regularly and keep the school up to date.

The minimum checks that we would place a teacher on are:

- Face-to-face interview
- Full cv
- Right to work check
- ID and proof of address check
- Signed Rehabilitation of the Offenders Act declaration
- DBS certificate
- References in progress
- TRA check
- Health declaration
- Online search
- Proficiency of the English Language Assessment
- Read and sign Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1
- Child Protection training
- Prevent training

Continued Suitability

In order to ensure that all work seekers registered with Step Teachers meeting safeguarding and suitability requirements on an ongoing basis, at least once a year we will conduct an update service status and Teacher Regulation Authority checks (subject to any shorter period imposed by a client).

Where a candidate has not worked with us for a period of 3 months, we will conduct an update service status check and Teacher Regulation Authority check and obtain an additional reference(s) to cover the period in question.

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Unsuitable Candidates - Information that comes to light after placement

If Step Teachers receives or obtains information after a candidate has been placed in an assignment, which gives reasonable grounds to believe that the candidate **is** unsuitable for the position, we shall, without delay, inform the client school of that information and end the supply of the candidate.

In cases where Step Teachers receives or obtain information which indicates that the candidate **may be** unsuitable, we shall, without delay, inform the client school and commence making such further enquiries as are reasonably practicable as to the suitability of the candidate for the position concerned and inform the school of the enquiries made and of any other further information received or obtained. Where, as a result of the enquiries made, Step Teachers has reasonable grounds to believe that the teacher is unsuitable for the position concerned, we shall, without delay, inform the client school of that information and end the supply of the candidate.

With regards to a candidate that has been placed permanently with a client school and if within a period of 3 months from the date of the introduction, Step Teachers receives or obtains information which indicate that the candidate is or may be unsuitable, we shall, without delay, inform the school of that information.

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