Safer Recruitment Policy

Date reviewed	31st July 2025
Review date	31st July 2026
Document type	Guardianship policy
Overview	Safer Recruitment Policy to ensure all recruitment complies with safer Recruitment best practice.
Status	Complete

Safer recruitment is the approach of designing recruitment processes for those who work with an organisation to deter unsuitable applicants from applying for roles with children and to identify and reject such applications if they apply.

Who does this Safer Recruitment Policy apply to?

This policy applies to job applicants, employees and host families. Those resident in Scotland comply with Disclosure Scotland regulations and those resident in other parts of the UK will comply with their national regulations – Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) in England and Wales and AccessNI if resident in Northern Ireland.

Safer recruitment – applicants and employees

All roles that require disclosure checks will advise accordingly in the advert and refer to our Safer Recruitment Policy. All job descriptions refer to the responsibility to comply with this policy. All applicants invited to interview are required to bring proof of ID, right to work in the UK and qualifications (where relevant) with them.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, then they are required to declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application. The Managing Director will then determine whether it is appropriate for them to be part of the process depending on the relationship.

A minimum of two references are taken up before a successful candidate can take up their position.

All recruitment checks and Disclosure must be completed satisfactorily before a successful candidate can start work for Academic Families.

Safer Recruitment Procedure

We recognise that Child Protection should not be treated in isolation and is incorporated within our Safer Recruitment Procedure.

Hosts

We accept that it is our responsibility to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted. We recruit volunteer Hosts by doing the following –

1. Registration - all applicants are required to complete a Host Registration Form.

2. Disclosure - we require Enhanced Disclosure for all members of the household aged 16 years or older.
    - In Scotland we require their PVG Scheme Record or Scheme Record Update.
    - In England, Wales and N Ireland where the PVG scheme doesn't operate, we require Enhanced Disclosure and we request they register with the Update service on receipt of their certificate.

3. References –
    - we ask for the names of two referees, one personal and one professional, who have known the candidate for at least two years, and who will be prepared to provide a written reference regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children.
    - We email the referees explaining the candidate's role, requesting their reference.
    - If there is concern about any aspect of the reference, then we telephone the referee to discuss their reference and confirm their ID.

4. Interview and home visit - we interview prospective Hosts in their home when we discuss their previous experience of working with children and undertake a home inspection

5. Self declaration - we ensure that every new Host completes Self declaration regarding criminal offences and medical fitness to host. Successful Hosts complete a Personal Profile

6. Probation - hosts must complete a probationary period of at least one hosting visit before being confirmed as an Academic Families Host.

Office Staff

We accept that it is our responsibility to check that all adults with substantial access to children have been appropriately vetted. We recruit employees and volunteer staff by doing the following -

1. Advertising – all job ads and interview introductions clearly state that Academic Families is a Safer Recruiter.

2. Disclosure - in Scotland we require their PVG Scheme Record or Record Update. In the rest of the UK we require their Enhanced Disclosure. Previous addresses up to 5 years are required for the Disclosure checks.

3. References –
    a. we ask for the names of two referees, one personal and one professional, who have known the candidate for at least two years, and who will be prepared to provide a written reference regarding the applicant's suitability to work in the role and with children.
    b. we email the referees explaining the candidate's role, requesting their reference.
    c. we telephone the referee to discuss the applicant's suitability to work in the role and their suitability to work with children.

4. Self declaration - we ensure that all new staff complete a Self declaration regarding criminal offences and medical fitness to work.

5. Office staff must complete a probationary period of at least three months.

Equality of opportunity

Academic Families is committed to the fair treatment of those who work with; apply to work with or host with Academic Families or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

Academic Families selects all candidates for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience alone and actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential. Academic Families welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, Academic Families ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter that might be relevant to

the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment or host agreement.

The PVG Scheme

Academic Families complies with the PVG code of practice.

Purpose and scope of The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland. It helps makes sure people whose behaviour makes them unsuitable to work with children, can NOT do 'regulated work' with this vulnerable group.

How the scheme works

On application to join the PVG Scheme, Disclosure Scotland carries out criminal record checks and shares the results with the Scheme Member (employee) and the applicant (Academic Families).

The application process involves gathering criminal record and other relevant information. This can be shared with Academic Families, unless a conviction has been removed from the PVG Scheme record.

If the information shows that an applicant might be unsuitable for regulated work, they will be referred for further investigation as part of the Disclosure Scotland 'consideration process'.

Once someone is a PVG scheme member

Disclosure Scotland continues to check new criminal records for Scheme Members to assess their suitability to continue working with children. If new information arises that means a Scheme Member might have become unsuitable to work with children, Disclosure Scotland will inform all associated organisations listed on the record, including Academic Families, that the Scheme Member's situation has changed.

'Harmful behaviour' by PVG scheme members

If the courts, police, regulatory bodies or previous employers provide information to Disclosure Scotland which suggests someone may be unsuitable for regulated work, this will trigger a consideration for listing.

Barred from regulated work

If Disclosure Scotland decides that a person is unsuitable to do regulated work with vulnerable groups, they will be barred from working with adults and/or children and removed from the PVG Scheme. Disclosure Scotland will inform associated organisations listed on the record, including Academic Families, that the person has been barred.

How long does it last?

A PVG Scheme member's paper certificate shows the information available on the day it was created. Membership of the scheme lasts forever though, and scheme members are continuously checked, unless they decide to leave the scheme.