International School Rheintal

Safer Recruitment Policy

Reviewed May 2021

International School Rheintal
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ISR Guiding Statements

International School Rheintal Vision

ISR is the school of choice in the Alpen Rheintal region providing a high quality international education in English for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, inspiring international-mindedness, academic and personal excellence and responsible engagement.

Reviewed June 2023

International School Rheintal Mission

ISR is a supportive, challenging and student-centred environment. We encourage each student to reach their potential whilst promoting international-mindedness, empathy and life-long learning. Through teamwork and individual endeavours, members of the school community should:

- Respect and take responsibility for themselves, others and the environment
- Appreciate and respect diversity
- Think critically
- Reflect thoughtfully
- Communicate effectively
- Celebrate success

Reviewed June 2023

Introduction

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. International School Rheintal (ISR) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff, board members, visiting teachers and volunteers to share this commitment. (Refer to the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.)

In line with Swiss legal requirements, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019 (KCSIE), the school takes very seriously its duty of care for all pupils. To help safeguard and promote the welfare of all its pupils the school is committed to the implementation of a thorough and consistent Safer Recruitment Policy

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the school's recruitment policy are as follows:

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their merits, abilities and suitability for the position, which includes their attitudes towards safeguarding and their ability to work with children in a way which promotes and ensures the safety and welfare of children.
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex, or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability, or age.
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations, and guidance.
- to ensure that the school meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks and by conducting the recruitment process in a way which prevents, as far as possible, the recruitment of individuals who are unsuitable to work with children.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves and complying with the provisions of this policy.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the municipalities and cantons to:

- ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff, governors, visiting teachers and volunteers in accordance with international school Swiss legal requirements.
- monitor the school's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of Human Resources and all leaders involved in recruitment to:

- ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and make sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, board members, visiting teachers and volunteers who work at the school.
- monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- promote the welfare of children at every stage of the procedure.

Please refer to the Recruitment Procedures for details of the procedures to be followed (Appendix 1).

Requirements to work at a private school in the canton of St. Gallen.

(See www.sg.ch/bildung-sport/volksschule/rahmenbedingungen/anstellung-lehrpersonen.html)

- Proof of right to work in Switzerland (a valid work permit)
- Proof of identity (valid passport)
- Copy of criminal records from all countries in which worked and/or lived.

Recruitment process and vetting checks

1. Advertising positions

Advertisements for all permanent positions are placed on the school website (http://www.isr.ch/about/work-with-us). In addition, adverts are published in other suitable places (e.g. local job websites, SGISchools, RAV or the TES jobs website) depending on the position available.

All job adverts make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

A copy of the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on the school's website or in hard copy to applicants on request.

2. Application Form

All applicants for employment are required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. The school will only consider candidates who have completed the application form in full. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed. Should there be any gaps in academic or employment history, a satisfactory explanation must be provided. A curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed application form.

3. References

All offers of employment are subject to the receipt of a minimum of three references that are considered satisfactory by the school. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/ did not involve work with children, then the second referee should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children (if applicable). Neither referee should be a relative or someone known to the applicant solely as a friend.

Referees are asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. Referees are sent a copy of the relevant job description and person specification. If the referee is a current or previous employer, they will also be asked to confirm the following:

- the applicant's dates of employment, job title/duties, reason for leaving, performance and disciplinary record.
- whether the applicant has ever been the subject of disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children (including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired), except where the issues were deemed to have resulted from allegations which were found to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious; and
- whether any allegations or concerns have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children, except where the allegation or concerns were found to be false, unsubstantiated, or malicious.

The school will only accept references obtained directly from the referee and it will not rely on references or testimonials provided by the applicant, nor on open references or testimonials. Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact, either by telephone or

face-to-face, will be made with at least one referee to verify the reference and to check that there are no child protection concerns.

4. Right to work in Switzerland

EU/EFTA citizens can freely enter Switzerland but must apply for a valid work authorisation. It is important to note that to get permission to work in Switzerland, different conditions apply for citizens who are from a country in the European Union or European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) and for citizens who are third-country nationals (nonEU/EFTA citizens). Non-EU/EFTA citizens will need to get a special residence permit with authorisation to work in Switzerland. Whether or not this authorisation will be granted usually depends on existing work quotas, educational level and work experience, and the non-availability of a suitable EU/EFTA candidate for the position.

Successful candidates will be able to apply for a valid work permit with the help of HR. They will need to have an address in local Switzerland, be able to supply a copy of their lease agreement/property deed, provide a copy of a valid passport, and for non-EU/EFTA citizens, a copy of a recent criminal records check.

The type of work permit requested will depend on the length of the contract.

5. Identity Checks

These will be carried out on all appointments to the school's workforce before an appointment is made. All applicants invited to interview will be required to bring proofs of identity (refer to the procedures below). Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g. marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. The school asks for the date of birth of all applicants (and proof of this). Proof of date of birth is necessary so that the school can verify the identity of candidates and check for any unexplained discrepancies in their employment and education history. The school does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Should an applicant arrive for an interview without the above documentary evidence without good cause, the interview may be cancelled and the school may choose not to progress their application further even upon subsequent submission of the documentation.

6. Criminal records

All new appointees are subject to a check in the form of Criminal records. With the assistance of HR, the successful applicant is required to obtain the Criminal records and an original copy must be provided to the School.

- For Swiss residents they can be obtained from: https://www.e-service.admin.ch/crex/cms/content/strafregister/uebersicht_de

In Switzerland and also in Austria, there are two forms of criminal record extracts; the standard extract and the "special" one for staff working with children and/or those in need of protection. The school requires newly hired staff to obtain a copy of both extracts. A signed document is required to apply for the special extract, which is provided by the Human Resources Department.

7. Checks for UK nationals or anyone who has previously lived/worked in the UK

Applicants with UK nationality or who have previously worked and/or lived in the UK will be asked to provide the current International Child Protection Certificate (ICPS). This certificate can be ordered online through the ACRO Criminal Records Office. https://www.acro.police.uk/ICPC-Organisations-(1)

Should there be a delay in receiving any of these checks, it will be at the discretion of the Director and/or HR to allow work to commence until they have received them. A risk assessment, including the need for appropriate supervision, will be completed, and signed by the Director before the person starts work and will be updated every fortnight.

If a criminal record is found during a check, the Director will decide on the suitability of the applicant, considering only those offences which may be relevant to the post or situation in question, the nature of the offence, the nature of the employment, the age of the applicant when the offence was committed, the frequency of the offence and subsequent good behaviour and work history. The Director will decide on any mitigating measures or controls to be put in place. Further details of the school's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders can be found below.

8. Checks from countries other than the UK, Switzerland, or Austria

Applicants with periods of residence outside the UK, Switzerland or Austria are asked to provide further information, including a criminal records / police clearance check from the relevant jurisdiction(s) for the last 10 years.

9. Prohibition from teaching

In addition to the criminal record check, we ask all applicants for posts involving 'teaching' to answer the questions below on the application form:

- Have you been cautioned, subject to a court order, received a reprimand or warning or been found guilty of committing any criminal offence in any country ?
- Is there any court action pending against you ?

10. Qualifications

Candidates must be able to demonstrate they have obtained any academic or vocational qualifications legally required for the post and claimed in their application.

11. Interviews

In addition to discussion of relevant skills and experience, candidates will be asked questions relating to child protection to ascertain the level of their knowledge and the suitability of their answers. It is recognised that not all interviewees will have child protection experience within schools. In such cases, questions will be adapted to test applicants' responses to hypothetical safeguarding scenarios. At least one member of staff involved with every appointment process will have received safer recruitment training (e.g. through Educare to Level 3). In addition, any member of staff responsible for assessing pre-employment checks will have received the relevant training.

12. Contractors and Supply Staff

The school will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor who is to work at the school, has been subject to the appropriate level of criminal records check. Contractors engaged in regulated activity or whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children will require criminal records checks. Occasional or temporary contractors not involved in regulated activity will not need criminal records check but an appropriate level of supervision will be arranged.

13. Visiting music teachers and other visiting teachers not supplied by a business or agency

Visiting teachers are subject to the same recruitment procedures and vetting checks as employed members of staff. Visiting music teachers and other visiting teachers who are not employees of the school must prove that they have status as an independent worker in Switzerland, certified by the AVS, before they commence working at the school. Visiting teachers who have independent status sign an agreement with the school on accepting a position at the school.

14. Volunteers

Volunteers engaging in regulated activity or whose work involves, or provides the opportunity for, regular contact with children will require the same level of recruitment checks as employed members of staff.

Prior to engaging a volunteer to carry out any activities for or on behalf of the School, the Director will decide what vetting checks are required, or whether it is appropriate to carry out a risk assessment.

15. Visiting Speakers

As is the case for all visitors to the school, visiting speakers will be accompanied by a member of staff for the duration of their time at the school. The Director and relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead must be made aware in advance of any visiting speaker coming to the school.

16. Policy on recruitment of candidates with a criminal conviction

The school undertakes to assess the suitability of all applicants for positions of trust fairly. We will not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a criminal records check based on a conviction or other information received.

The school is committed to the fair treatment of its staff, potential staff, or users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependents, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

We actively promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills, and potential and welcome applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records. We select all candidates for an interview based on their skills, qualifications, and experience.

Criminal records checks are only requested where the school deems that it is both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned. For those positions where checks are required, all application forms, job adverts and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that checks will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position.

Where criminal records check form part of the recruitment process, we encourage all applicants called for interview to provide details of any criminal record at an early stage in the application process. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to HR and we guarantee that this information will be seen only by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process.

At interview, or in a separate discussion, we ensure that an open and measured discussion takes place about any offences or any other matter that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly related to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of the offer of employment.

We undertake to discuss any matter revealed in criminal records check with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.

17. Assessment criteria

If relevant information, whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise, is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a criminal records check, the school will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question.
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed.
- the age of the applicant when the offence was committed and the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred.
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters; the applicant's subsequent career and good behaviour.
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters.
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the applicant.

If the post involves regular contact with children, it is the school's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences:

- murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm, or other serious acts of violence.
- serious drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception, or fraud.

If the post involves access to money or budget responsibility, it is the school's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception, or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is the school's normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of drink driving within the last ten years.

18. Assessment procedure

If relevant information, whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise, is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the school will carry out a risk assessment by reference to the criteria set out above. The risk assessment form will be signed by the Director before a position is offered.

In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the school may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

19. Protection and security of disclosure information

In particular, and in accordance with our Data Protection Policy, we will:

- store disclosure information in locked, non-portable storage containers, access to which will be restricted to the Director and HR.
- not retain disclosure information or any associated correspondence for longer than is necessary, which is generally for a period of up to six months. Throughout this time, the usual conditions regarding the safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.
- ensure that, once the retention period has elapsed, any disclosure information is destroyed by suitably secure means such as shredding. Whilst awaiting destruction, disclosure information will not be kept in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack).

In the School's Single Central Register, we will keep a record of the date of issue of a disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of disclosure requested, the position for which the disclosure was requested and the unique reference number of the disclosure.

20. Retention of records

In line with our data protection policy, if an applicant is successful in their application, the school will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in Switzerland and qualifications.

This documentation will be retained by the school for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the school. It will be retained for a period of ten years after employment terminates, after which it will be securely destroyed.

If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will be confidentially destroyed after six months.

21. Queries

If an applicant has any queries on how to complete the application form or any other matter, they should contact the Human Resources.

Appendix 1: RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

1. Vacancy

The vacancy and its requirements are discussed by the LT & HR. The following are agreed:

- How and where to advertise. All roles must advertise.
- Composition of the interview panel, including the Chair. The Chair will always have undertaken safer recruitment training (e.g. via Educare). Depending on the advertised role, the interview panel will include as follows:
    - Teaching and learning roles will have a teaching panel with the Director/Head of School, department colleagues and Curriculum Coordinator alongside an HR panel with the head of HR and a member of the LT.
    - Support roles will include, as a minimum, the Director, Head of finance/HR or Head of Operations.
- Director appointments will be chaired by the ISR Board Chair and will include representatives of the ISR community, as determined by the Board.
- When to interview
- Who will read and shortlist applications (always including the Chair and HR)
- Elements of the interview programme, including tasks, observed lessons, tours and which member of the panel will ask safeguarding and child protection questions. This person must have up to date child protection training to Level 3.

The line manager/appropriate member of LT draw up the advertisement, job description and person specification, which are checked by the line manager, Director and HR.

2. Advertisements

For internally advertised temporary positions (e.g. a maternity cover for which suitably qualified teaching assistants might apply) the Head sends an email to all members of staff with details of the post and how to apply.

In all other cases the advertisement, job description and person specification are placed on the school website by HR.

HR may also place the advertisement in other agreed locations. Permanent teaching positions are usually advertised in the TES online.

3. Applications

Applications are sent by email to HR, who acknowledges receipt. HR checks and collates applications in a folder on the shared HR Drive, to which only the interviewing panel has access.

4. Interview programme

HR draws up a draft interview programme and circulates it to members of the interview panel before finalising. The programme should include an agreed time for the panel's decision meeting.

5. Longlisting & Shortlisting

Longlisting and shortlisting of candidates for interview is carried out as soon as possible after the deadline for applications, having due regard to the school's commitment to equal opportunities and fair treatment for potential staff, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, or physical/mental disability.

All members of the shortlisting panel review the applications and write their recommends on the shared document.

6. References

As soon as a shortlist of candidates to invite to interview has been drawn up, HR will request references (at least three for each candidate), taking due note of whether the candidate has given their consent for the school to contact referees before interview. The school asks referees to complete their reference using the school's reference request form.

As they arrive, HR will post references in the confidential folder on the shared Drive and send notifications to members of the interview panel. HR compares all references with the information given on the application form. Any inconsistencies, anomalies, doubts about the validity of the reference, or expressions of concern about the candidate will be recorded on the shared candidate file.

The HR makes direct contact, either via a work telephone number or face to face, with each referee to verify the authenticity of all references and to check that there are no child protection concerns, making a handwritten note (with initials and date) on a 'master' paper copy of the reference to show that this has been done. It is an offence to falsify references. Applicants or referees who are found to have submitted false references to the school will be referred to the local authorities.

Any offer made by the school will always be subject to the receipt of three references that are deemed satisfactory by the school and on satisfactory recruitment checks.

7. Invitation to interview

As soon as a shortlist of candidates to invite to interview has been drawn up, the HR will contact the candidates by email and follow up with an invitation to attend for interview.

8. Interviews

As part of the interview process the Chair of the panel will ensure that:

- a set of agreed questions and/or tasks is prepared before the interviews.
- any identified gaps in candidates' education or employment record are followed up with the candidate. A candidate's explanation of any gaps will be recorded and initialled by the Chair on his/her paper copy of the application form, which will then be the 'master' that is returned to HR for filing.
- appropriate child protection questions are asked by a member of the panel who has up to date training in child protection to Level 3
- notes are made by members of the panel during the interviews (usually by those who are not asking the question at the time) and submitted to HR.
- notes are taken by members of the panel observing lessons or tasks and submitted to HR.

9. Panel meeting and decision

The Chair will conduct the panel meeting, which will lead to a decision about which, if any, of the candidates should be offered the position. The Chair will inform HR of the decisions made.

10. Verbal offer

The initial job and salary offer will be made by the Director/Chair of the panel by telephone (or in person) and then followed up with a brief email to confirm. Unless the offer is declined, the successful applicant should be reminded that the offer is conditional upon the receipt of three satisfactory written references (unless already received) and satisfactory recruitment checks.

11. Formal written offer and acceptance of the position

Using relevant information provided by the Chair, HR will draft an offer letter and contract/agreement. Once checked and agreed by the Director, HR will send these documents by email. The successful applicant should return signed/completed copies to HR. The HR will inform the Director and panels when these documents have been received.

12. Recruitment checks

In accordance with this policy, HR will begin the process of applying for the appropriate recruitment checks for the successful applicant. See above for the school's policy on the action to be taken if there is a delay in receiving a disclosure or police check.

13. Unsatisfactory reference(s) or recruitment checks

If the School deems a reference or recruitment check to be unsatisfactory, the Director will contact the successful applicant and speak to them directly, either face to face or by telephone/video call. Unless there is a satisfactory explanation (e.g. a mistake on the form) the offer of employment will be withdrawn and reasons for this decision will be given. See above for the school's policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

14. Informing unsuccessful candidates after interview

The Director will liaise with HR regarding contacting unsuccessful candidates after interview. This is sometimes done by the Director by telephone and/or email, especially if the school wishes to provide positive feedback. In other cases, it may be done by email via HR.

15. Feedback to unsuccessful candidates after interview

Unless the School chooses to be proactive (see above), we do not generally undertake to provide detailed feedback to unsuccessful candidates after interview unless we feel that there is something we could say or some advice we could give that would be genuinely helpful.

16. Notices to staff and parents

The Director will communicate the result of recruitment process to members of staff via email/staff briefing/notices.

Parents will then normally be informed by letter and/or newsletter at the appropriate time.

Board members are informed of new recruits via the Directors reports to the Board.

17. Contacting the successful applicant / arranging a visit

Once the process is complete, the line manager will normally contact the successful applicant to begin the process of induction and integration.

18. Collation/retention/disposal of documents

If not already received, HR will remind members of the interview panel to return:

- all shortlisting forms
- all interview/observation notes
- The interview assessment/decision forms

The HR is responsible for collecting these documents and for retaining and/or securely disposing of them in accordance with this policy and the School's Data Protection Policy.

HR will also retain other documents associated with the recruitment process in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy. These include application forms, references, recruitment checks, shortlisting forms, interview programmes, interview notes, interview assessment forms, relevant correspondence with candidates, signed offer letters and signed contracts.

Any electronic copies of application forms, references, shortlisting forms etc held by members of the interview panel must be securely deleted immediately after the conclusion of the recruitment process.

19. Record of Appointment and Single Central Register

At the end of the process HR will complete a Record of Appointment (Appendix 2) and make the appropriate entry in the School's Single Central Register.

May 2021

Appendix 2: RECORD OF APPOINTMENT

Name: _____

Position: _____

Date of appointment: _____
(Start date in school)

Leaving date: _____
(Where applicable)

Task	Date/Reference Number/Details	Checked by
Identity checks		
Qualifications		
DBS/UK criminal records check		
Prohibition Checks		
Casier judiciaire		
Police checks from other countries		
Right to work in Switzerland		
References		
Application form		
Medically fit to work		
Head of HR's notes		

Appendix 3: DOCUMENTATION

HR is responsible for reviewing and keeping up to date copies of all documentation associated with the School's recruitment process:

- Templates for job advertisements
- Application form
- Template invitation to interview
- Reference request forms
- Template for acknowledging receipt of applications
- Template for writing to unsuccessful candidates after interview
- Interview assessment form
- Template for shortlisting forms
- Template for interview programmes
- Risk assessment form for staff commencing employment prior to receipt of criminal background check(s)
- Risk assessment form for employment of an ex-offender
- Contracts and agreements

HR will also keep an eye on the 'Work with us' pages of the school's website, ensuring (via the Communications Specialist) that the information published there is accurate and up to date.

NB - Last policy review led in 2021 by Liz Free, CEO and Director