

# HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd

## Safer Recruitment Policy

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### Policy Statement

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at all times while they are under our care.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd adhere to the principles of the statutory 'Safer Recruitment' guidance for schools, and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) 'Safer Recruitment' advice.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd follow the Association for the Education and Guardianship of International Students (AEGIS) guidelines as part of an on-going accreditation process. This is to ensure our students receive the highest standards of homestay and care while under our guardianship.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd is aware of additional sources of advice and guidance for the standards required for homestay recruitment including the British Council (Homestay guidelines and Codes of Practice), and the Department for Education Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards (updated May 2026).

This policy is supported by the most recent version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' part three. HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd have a rigorous process for recruiting staff and homestays in accordance with the principles of 'Safer Recruitment'. This is from point of advertisement to post induction, with on-going monitoring and safeguarding reviews.

The Safer Recruitment policy aims to help to deter, reject, or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. At every stage of the process, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd is commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is highlighted.

### Aims of the policy

The aims of the policy are:

- To ensure that HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd meets the commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks as part of the Safer Recruitment process
- To ensure that the best possible members of staff and homestays are recruited on their abilities and suitability for the advertised role in line with relevant legislation, recommendations, and guidance

- To ensure that no applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability, or age. The recruitment and selection process will ensure the identification of the person best suited to the advertised role based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience, and merit as measured against the job description and person specification. If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

## Recruitment procedure for staff

### Advertising a role

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd plan the recruitment exercise to ensure that the recruitment panel are clear about the qualities, qualifications and experience needed by the successful candidate and whether there are any particular matters that need to be mentioned in the advertisement for the post. This is in order to prevent unwanted applications or ultimately an unsuitable appointment.

The job and person specification for each role form part of the pack sent to prospective candidates, and set out the extent that the role involves working with children and young people, and the safeguarding responsibility involved.

Advertisements for roles make HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd is commitment to safeguarding clear by including the following statement: "HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment." References will be sought and scrutinised in accordance with safer recruitment requirements and, wherever possible, obtained before interview to enable any concerns to be explored with the applicant.

Applicants will be informed that online searches may be undertaken as part of the organisation's safer recruitment procedures to help identify any incidents or issues that may be relevant to their suitability to work with children.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd's advertisements also include the requirement for each applicant obtaining an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check from original identification documents and, evidence of their right to work in the UK in accordance with current Home Office requirements. The advertisements also include details of the post, payments and qualities required to fulfil the role.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd do not accept curriculum vitae (CV) drawn up by the applicant without an accompanying application form being submitted. This is because a CV presents only the

information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details. The application form details the safeguarding mission statement, the requirement for an applicant to have an enhanced DBS and for references to be sought prior to interview where possible. Completed application forms and accompanying CVs are stored securely on a confidential computer drive by UK Office Director.

The UK Office Director maintains the bank of job adverts securely and confidentially. The details are circulated via online advertising organisations which require applicants to submit expressions of interest together with their CV to the company.

### The Application Form

On receipt of expressions of interest and accompanying CVs, the DSL will screen initial submissions, and the application form will be sent to applicants who have the potential to meet the requirements of the job specification and person specification.

Through the application form, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd obtains the following information:

- full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address, and National Insurance number;
- a statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications that the applicant has obtained, relevant to the position for which s/he is applying, with details of the awarding body and date of award;
- a full history, in chronological order, since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training, part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start and end dates along with explanations for periods not in employment, education or training and reasons for leaving employment; Any gaps, anomalies or discrepancies in employment or education history will be explored and satisfactorily explained during the recruitment process.
- a declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers;
- details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer. Normally, two referees should be sufficient. N.B. Where an applicant who is not currently working with children has done so in the past it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed with regard to their work with children. The form makes it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends, and references will be obtained and scrutinised in accordance with safer recruitment requirements. Any inconsistencies, discrepancies or concerns identified from references will be explored with the applicant before appointment.
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification.

Where a role involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will make applicants aware on the application form that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

There will be a self-disclosure process introduced for short listed candidates to ensure the applicant has an opportunity to raise all information in a confidential way. Only shortlisted applicants will be asked to provide any information about unspent and unprotected criminal records. Short listed applicants will be asked to declare that they are not disqualified from working with children through the Disclosure and Barring Service's (DBS) Barring Lists, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory or professional body, criminal convictions, cautions, safeguarding concerns, regulatory sanctions, disqualifications, or other information relevant to their suitability to work with children. Any disclosures can be discussed with them prior to or at interview (pending receipt of the completed enhanced DBS check).

All shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches may be carried out as part of the organisation's safer recruitment procedures to help identify any incidents or issues that may be relevant to their suitability to work with children. Information obtained through online searches will be considered alongside other recruitment checks.

If the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, their current employer with children will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children, including any in which the penalty is time-expired (that is where a warning could no longer be taken into account in any new disciplinary hearing for example) and whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns and, if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. If the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues.

Providing false, misleading or incomplete information may result in an application being rejected, withdrawal of an offer of employment, disciplinary action, dismissal, referral to relevant regulatory bodies, and/or referral to the police where appropriate.

### **The Job Description and Person Specification**

Once a post becomes vacant, or a new post is created, the DSL will review the job description to ensure compliance with the Safer Recruitment guidance.

The job description will state the main duties and responsibilities of the post; and the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children s/he is responsible for or comes into contact with. The extent of this responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post being advertised.

## The Person Specification

The Person Specification forms part of the recruitment documentation and sets out the essential and desirable criteria for the role, including the qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, competencies and personal qualities required to perform the role effectively. The Person Specification will also identify how these requirements will be assessed throughout the recruitment and selection process.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or recruiting manager will review the Person Specification periodically to ensure compliance with current safeguarding, child protection and safer recruitment requirements.

The Person Specification and recruitment process will reflect the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. The selection process, including the interview, will explore the applicant's suitability to work with children and may assess:

- motivation to work with children and young people;
- ability to establish and maintain appropriate professional relationships and boundaries with children and young people;
- emotional resilience and capacity to manage challenging situations appropriately;
- understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and child protection principles appropriate to the role; and
- any issues arising from references, employment history, application forms, self-disclosures, online searches or other pre-employment checks.

Shortlisted applicants will be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns or discrepancies identified through the recruitment process.

## The Application Information Pack

In addition to the application form, applicants will be provided with a recruitment information pack containing:

- the application form;
- the job description and person specification;
- information regarding the requirement to undertake pre-employment and safeguarding checks, including an Enhanced DBS check and, where applicable, a children's barred list check;
- information that HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will obtain and scrutinise references and may contact current and previous employers to verify employment history, experience, qualifications and suitability to work with children;
- HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and safeguarding statement;
- information regarding the organisation's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people;
- a statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post;
- information that online searches may be undertaken on shortlisted applicants as part of the organisation's safer recruitment procedures; and

- information that, where the applicant is currently or has previously worked with children, referees may be asked about disciplinary matters, safeguarding concerns, allegations, or concerns relating to the welfare and protection of children, including those which have been resolved and are no longer current.

### Scrutinising and shortlisting applications

Two members of staff are responsible for scrutinising applications and short-listing candidates. At least one member of the panel is Safer Recruitment trained.

All applications are checked to ensure they are fully and properly completed, that the information is consistent, does not contain any discrepancies and to ensure that any gaps in employment are identified.

As per the Safer Recruitment guidance, incomplete application forms will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant for completion.

Any gaps in employment will be noted and considered during the short-listing process. In addition, reasons for any repeated changes of employment without a clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work will also be explored and verified.

All applicants will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation and without unlawful discrimination.

Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records; further information can be found on GOV.UK. HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will ask staff to complete a self-declaration on an annual basis thereafter to ensure that the information remains up to date. Should the circumstances of any member of staff change in the meantime, it is their responsibility to inform the guardianship organisation immediately.

All shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches will be undertaken.

A copy of the interview form is kept on the personnel file.

### Online Search

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will carry 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 we might want to explore with the applicant at interview. All shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches will be undertaken.

## References

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd seek references for each application to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee with comments requested on work, professional competence and personal qualities. In the case of a potential member of staff, references will be requested from the candidate's current employer if an applicant is currently employed. References will always be obtained in writing.

Referees are asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children, to outline any concerns about the applicant working with children or any disciplinary details.

'To whom it may concern' references are not accepted by HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd to reduce the risk of making an appointment decision on a forged reference.

Where (due to operational need) a reference is secured over the telephone in the first instance a record must be made of the telephone reference. Following this initial record, the reference will be obtained in writing as soon as practicable to provide a record of the information obtained from the referee.

Where electronic references are received, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

Once the references have been received, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will verify the source of the reference. If concerns are raised within the reference, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will address these by telephoning the referee, providing an opportunity for HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd to ask any further questions where required. A log of the call will be placed on file. The references will be retained on file for the duration of contract/employment and then an agreed period afterward, normally 5 -7 years.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd is required to check that information provided in references is not contradictory or incomplete. On receipt, references will be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee will be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example if the answers are vague or if insufficient information is provided. They will also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the candidate.

Any offer of employment will always be conditional on the receipt of satisfactory references.

## Invitation to interview

In addition to the arrangements for interviews – time and place, directions to the venue, membership of the interview panel – the invitation will remind candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children. Enclosing a copy of the person specification can usefully draw attention to the relevant information.

The invitation will also stress that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be, and that where an enhanced DBS Disclosure is appropriate the person will be required to complete an application for a DBS Disclosure straight away. Consequently all candidates will be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy the requirements when applying for an enhanced DBS i.e. either a current driving licence or passport including a photograph, or a full birth certificate, plus a recent document (within the last three months) such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address and where appropriate change of name documentation. In addition, where the candidate needs permission to work in the UK, they must produce this documentation at the interview for checking and verification.

Candidates will also be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of his or her relevant qualifications will be obtained from the awarding body.

A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept for the personnel file. Separate copies of documents are not required to be kept in order to meet the requirements of maintaining the single central record.

Wherever possible, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will obtain references for short-listed candidates prior to the interview. If candidates ask that references are not sought prior to interview, any provisional offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory references being obtained.

## Interviews

The interview will be conducted by at least two people who will have met before the interview to agree the required standard for the role, consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and how the interview will be conducted. At least one of the two people on the interview panel must be Safer Recruitment trained.

Two interviewers allow for one interviewer to observe and assess the candidate while the other interviewer makes notes using the pre-planned competency-based question set. This reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview.

The panel will agree the questions they will ask candidates during the interview, the issues that may have been identified in the application form and references that may need exploring. This will include:

- the candidate's attitude toward children;
- their ability to support the organisation's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- gaps in the candidate's employment history;
- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a reference; and
- the panel will also ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an enhanced DBS check.

The panel will record the interview on the HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd Interview Form.

If, for whatever reason, references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate will also be asked at interview if there is anything they wish to declare or discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to their referees. It is vital that the references are obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed and before they start work.

The interview process will ask the candidate to produce original documentation of any educational or professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant to the post. If the candidate is not able to produce the certificates, written confirmation of his or her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

A copy of the documents used to verify the candidate's identity, right to work in the UK and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file. These will be checked, signed and dated by the verifier. Confirmation that these documents have been inspected will be recorded on the recruitment form.

A copy of the interview form is kept on the personnel file.

### **Conditional Offer of Appointment**

The appointment of the successful candidate will be conditional upon the receipt of at least two satisfactory references (for further details see information above), proof of identification, proof of right to work in the UK (if appropriate), an enhanced DBS check, verification of qualifications where they are a requirement of the post and the completion of any probationary period.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will follow relevant DBS guidance if a check reveals information that a candidate has not disclosed in the course of the selection process. Enhanced DBS checks will always be followed up where the results are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

Where the candidate is found to be disqualified from working with children by a court; or an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application; or there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children, the facts must be reported to the relevant authorities, such as the DBS or the Police by the DSL.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd requests all staff and Homestays complete a medical declaration on appointment. This information will be kept confidentially and securely.

#### **Further details on Pre-Appointment Vetting Checks HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd undertakes**

All offers of appointment are conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks. HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will:

- Verify the candidate's identity using current photographic identification and other appropriate documentation. Where a candidate has changed their name, evidence of the name change should be obtained and scrutinised to ensure the individual is the person they claim to be. Further identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website.
- Obtain an Enhanced DBS check, including a children's barred list check where the role involves regulated activity with children. The DBS certificate must be obtained and reviewed before the individual commences work unless a risk-assessed exception permitted by law applies. Where the DBS Update Service is used, the original certificate must be seen and the status check completed before appointment.
- Verify that the candidate has the health and physical capacity to carry out the role, taking account of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Relevant health-related questions will only be asked where permitted by law and where necessary to determine suitability for the role.
- Verify the candidate's right to work in the UK in accordance with current Home Office requirements and retain evidence of the check. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will follow the advice on the GOV.UK website.
- Where a candidate has lived or worked outside the UK, undertake such additional checks as are considered appropriate. These may include obtaining overseas criminal record information, certificates of good conduct, employment references and any other relevant safeguarding checks.

- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.
- As part of the shortlisting process, candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration regarding their suitability to work with children, including information about criminal convictions and other relevant safeguarding matters, in accordance with current legislation and KCSIE requirements.
- HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will carry out an online search of shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that may be relevant to their suitability to work with children. Candidates will be informed that such searches may be undertaken as part of the recruitment process.

### **Post Appointment: Induction**

Newly appointed staff members must have an induction programme to complete, regardless of previous experience. The induction programme includes policy and procedure training, details of the support available for individuals in their new role, confirmation of agreement to abide by the Staff Code of Conduct and provides opportunities for new staff members to discuss any issues or concerns through 1:1 meetings with their line manager.

The content and nature of the induction will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff; however, it will always include the safeguarding and child protection policy, safeguarding arrangements for children who are absent from education (particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods), the behaviour policy (including measures to prevent bullying, cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), the staff and homestay code of conduct, the role and identity of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs, procedures for reporting concerns, the low-level concerns policy, the whistleblowing policy, and information about who to approach with concerns regarding their role or responsibilities.

The induction programme will include safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety, and an understanding of staff responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring systems where applicable. Safeguarding training will be regularly updated, and all staff will receive safeguarding updates at least annually. All staff will be required to read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Where appropriate, Annex A may be used as supplementary guidance for staff who do not work directly with children. The line manager of the newly appointed staff member will report any concerns or issues about a person's ability or suitability for the role at the outset and address these immediately.

### **Maintaining a safer culture**

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd recognises the importance of maintaining a strong safeguarding culture and ensuring that all staff remain vigilant to safeguarding and child protection concerns. Staff receive appropriate induction, safeguarding and child protection training, and regular safeguarding updates to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out.

Safeguarding and child protection updates are provided regularly by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mei Xian, and may include updates on safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements, emerging risks, and lessons learned from safeguarding practice.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd encourages staff, parents, students, homestay hosts, guardians, and partner organisations to raise any concerns relating to the safety, welfare, or protection of children. All concerns will be taken seriously, responded to appropriately, and managed in accordance with the organisation's safeguarding and child protection procedures.

## Recruitment procedure for Homestays

### Planning and Advertising

Homestay recruitment advertisements will include HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Advertisements will be circulated through appropriate channels to attract suitable homestay hosts in areas of need and will make clear that all applicants are subject to suitability assessments, references, home inspections and safeguarding checks before approval.

### Application Form and Application Pack

The homestay responds to the advertisement by completing Host Family Application Form. Applicants must be aged 25 years or over and be assessed as suitable to accommodate and support children and young people. Suitability will be determined through references, interviews, home inspections, DBS checks and other safeguarding checks as appropriate.

Following receipt of an expression of interest, applicants will be provided with a Host Family Application Form requesting information relevant to the assessment of their suitability to provide homestay accommodation. Where the role involves regulated activity relating to children, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will make applicants aware that it is a criminal offence for a person who is barred from such activity to apply for the role. Instructions on the form include explanatory notes about completing the form, information regarding the role and responsibilities of a homestay host, the expectations of the placement, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the relevant terms and conditions of approval.

The Application Form outlines the requirement for the applicant, all household members aged 16 and over, and any adult who resides in, stays overnight in, or regularly visits the accommodation during periods when students are hosted, to undergo an Enhanced DBS check where required by the organisation's safeguarding procedures. The applicant will be required to provide evidence (i.e. original documents) of their identification to the staff interviewer during the initial inspection for verification.

Enhanced DBS checks are required for all members of the homestay aged 16 and over and any individual who stays regularly with the homestay. If any family members are studying at university but come back during the holidays when students will be hosted, then they will also need a DBS check.

The application form will explain how Hope International Education (UK) Ltd may contact the Local Authority to check if they know of any reason why the candidate may be unsuitable to host children.

The primary host, and/or individual household members where required, will complete a suitability self-declaration covering criminal convictions, cautions, safeguarding concerns, disqualifications, and any other information relevant to their suitability to accommodate children and young people. Alternatively, each household member could complete an individual self-declaration. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records; further information can be found on GOV.UK

### **The Job Description and Person Specification**

Once a post becomes vacant or a new post is created, the DSL will review the job description to ensure compliance with the Safer Recruitment guidance and confirmation that the main duties and responsibilities are outlined. This will include the responsibility for safeguarding the students that the homestay is responsible for.

The Person Specification is supplementary information to the job description and lists essential and desirable criteria (for example qualifications, experience, competences and qualities) for the post. This document will be reviewed by the DSL to ensure compliance with the Safer Recruitment guidance.

All homestay role descriptions and recruitment materials will include a statement of HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

### **Scrutinising and short listing**

When the application form is submitted, the Hope International Education (UK) Ltd, UK Office Director scrutinises the form to ensure it is fully and properly completed, applicants are in the right homestay area for the students and are suitable for the initial inspection and interview stage.

All candidates are assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation and without unlawful discrimination.

There is a disclosure process for short listed candidates to ensure the applicant has an opportunity to raise all information in a confidential way. Disclosure forms are completed by the primary carer on behalf of the whole homestay (aged 16 and over). Only shortlisted applicants will be asked to provide any information about unspent and unprotected criminal records. Short listed applicants will be asked to declare that they are not disqualified from working with children through the Disclosure and Barring Service's (DBS) Barring Lists, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory or professional body, and have no convictions, cautions or bind overs. Any disclosures can be discussed with them prior to or at interview (pending receipt of the completed enhanced DBS check). Hope International Education (UK)

Ltd will ask homestays to complete declaration forms on an annual basis to ensure that information remains up to date. Should the circumstances of any member of the homestay change in the meantime, it is the homestays' responsibility to inform the guardianship organisation immediately.

All shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches will be undertaken.

### Online Search

Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will carry out an online search as part of their due diligence on potential homestays. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with the applicant at interview. All potential homestays will be informed that online searches may be undertaken.

### References

Homestay references for the primary carer/s are requested prior to interview. This is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. As a minimum, one personal and one professional reference must be obtained for each primary carer, or one professional reference for each primary carer with one joint personal reference. The homestay must provide written permission to confirm these references can be sought. References will always be obtained in writing.

When the application form is submitted the applicant must nominate referees who they have known in a professional and personal capacity, with the personal referee having known the applicant for a minimum of two years.

Referees are asked to comment on work, professional competence and personal qualities. Referees are asked to comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children, to outline any concerns about the applicant working with children or any disciplinary details.

References which are submitted online are reviewed to ensure we have obtained independent professional and character references that answer specific questions. This helps to assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and follow up any concerns.

'To whom it may concern' references are not accepted by Hope International Education (UK) Ltd to reduce the risk of making an appointment decision on a forged reference.

Where (due to operational need) a reference is secured over the telephone in the first instance a record must be made of the telephone reference. Following this initial record, the reference will be obtained in writing as soon as practicable to provide a record of the information obtained from the referee.

Where electronic references are received, Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

Once the references have been received, Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will verify the information given in the reference. If concerns are raised within the reference, Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will address these by telephoning the referee, providing an opportunity for Hope International Education (UK) Ltd to ask any further questions where required. A log of the call will be

placed on file. The references will be retained on file for the duration of contract/employment and then an agreed period afterward, normally 5 -7 years.

Hope International Education (UK) Ltd is required to check that information provided in references is not contradictory or incomplete. On receipt, references will be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee will be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate, for example if the answers are vague or if insufficient information is provided. They will also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the candidate.

Any offer of employment will always be conditional on the receipt of satisfactory references.

### **Interviews and initial visits**

For applicants who are short listed, the UK Office Director will arrange the initial visit. The invitation for the initial visit and interview will stress that the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly in terms of identification and the completion of an enhanced DBS check. This will require the candidate to provide to the interviewer documentary evidence of their identity (for example current driving licence, passport, full birth certificate, plus documents for example a recent utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's full name and address). Where a candidate has changed their name, full documentation must be provided detailing the previous name and current name.

The homestay applicant is advised and given instructions on how to prepare for the identification and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check during the visit.

During the initial visit, the staff member interviews the applicants face to face to confirm suitability for the role and suitability to work with children.

The staff interviewer inspects the house, garden and any car which will be used to transport students and secures photographs of the property (including individual rooms).

The staff interviewer is encouraged to discuss the homestay's previous employment history and experience, and to note any indications that the primary carers may not have the health and/or physical capacity for the role, together with the applicant's right to work in the UK where appropriate. The interviewer must check and verify the documents used to verify an applicant's identity, right to work in the UK and/or qualifications (where appropriate), as per the instructions on *UCheck*. Permission is sought to retain a copy of the documents used to verify homestay identity, right to work and required qualifications. These will be kept on the personnel file.

The staff interviewer will keep a written record of the interview, and these will be stored in the homestay personnel file.

### **Scope of the interview**

The interviewer will assess and evaluate the applicant's suitability for being a Hope International Education (UK) Ltd homestay, their motivation for working with children and young people, and their

ability to support the company aims and principles. There is scope on the visit form to record this detail which will be submitted to Head Office for assessment.

The interviewer is encouraged to ask the applicants aged 16 or over in the homestay if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for an Enhanced DBS disclosure.

Where references have not been returned to Head Office before an interview, the prospective homestay can be asked at interview if there is anything they wish to declare or discuss in light of the question.

Any information disclosed through self-declarations, references, online searches, DBS checks, interviews, home inspections or other safeguarding checks will be considered as part of the overall suitability assessments that have been or will be put to their referees.

### **Conditional Offer of Appointment and DBS Checks**

The successful applicants will be conditionally accepted pending references, proof of identification, proof of right to work in the UK (if appropriate), an enhanced DBS check (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity with children), verification of qualifications where they are a requirement of the post and the completion of any probationary period.

As part of the vetting process, Hope International Education (UK) Ltd may contact the Local Authority to check if they know of any reason why the candidate may be unsuitable to host children. We make all candidates aware of this on our application form.

### **Further details on Pre-Appointment Vetting Checks Hope International Education (UK) Ltd undertakes**

All offers of appointment are conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks. Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will:

- Verify the candidate's identity using appropriate photographic identification and supporting documentation. Where a candidate has changed their name, evidence of the name change should be obtained and scrutinised to ensure the individual is the person they claim to be. Further guidance on identity checking can be found on the GOV.UK website.
- Obtain an Enhanced DBS check, including children's barred list information where the role involves regulated activity with children. Where the DBS Update Service is used, the original DBS certificate must be seen and a status check completed before appointment. A record of the DBS certificate number, level of check, date of issue and date checked will be retained in accordance with the organisation's record-keeping procedures.
- Verify that the candidate has the health and physical capacity to carry out the role, taking account of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Relevant health-related questions will only be asked where permitted by law and necessary to determine suitability for the role.

- Verify the candidate's right to work in the UK in accordance with current Home Office requirements and retain evidence of the check.
- an overseas check will be undertaken if a member of staff, volunteer or homestay member has lived or worked abroad for more than 3 months in the last five years.; and,
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.

### **Post Appointment: Induction**

Newly appointed homestays are provided with a Homestay Handbook which contains guidance and advice for the role of homestay. The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is also made available to the homestay, as is Child Protection Training.

Homestays have on-going support from Mei XIAN, UK Office Director regardless of their experience of the homestay role.

### **Post Appointment: On-going training and monitoring**

Hope International Education (UK) Ltd homestays receive monthly bulletins containing updates and safeguarding news. This is to ensure that guidance is regularly circulated and homestays have continual access to Safeguarding Training and regular NSPCC Safeguarding and Child Protection updates.

The homestay's initial visits and annual revisit process provide Hope International Education (UK) Ltd with the infrastructure to continually monitor the quality of homestays. These visits check that the highest standards are afforded to our students. Written records of annual visits will be stored in the homestay personnel file.

Homestays must inform Hope International Education (UK) Ltd of any changes to their circumstances. This includes changes to DBS status and any changes to who is living in the household (whether members have moved in or out).

### **Further information about temporary visitors/ other students**

Homestays are required to inform us in advance when they have a temporary overnight visitor staying at the same time as hosting one of our students.

Where there is an overseas student staying with a UK homestay via a private arrangement or through another Guardianship Organisation, an enhanced DBS check will not be required, although homestays must inform us that they are hosting additional students.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed.

The reviews will cover:

- staff turnover and reasons for leaving;
- exit interviews;
- attendance of new recruits at child protection training.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: .....22/06/2026.....(date)

Signed: *M.xian* .....

Date: .....22/06/2026.....