

DISCLOSURE POLICY

The School's policy on Disclosure is derived from statutory guidance contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education, The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014 as in force from 5th January 2015, and the Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards. It is imperative that the policy be followed with rigour as any failure, in addition to potentially putting a young person at risk, could lead to punitive damages being awarded against the School if any such failure led to a child being abused.

The Bursar will retain overall responsibility for the proper discharge of the Disclosure process which, on a day-to-day basis, will be undertaken by the Human Resources Team. In accordance with Section 124 of the Police Act 1997, Disclosure information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. For Tonbridge School, such authorised persons are the Headmaster, Deputy Head Pastoral (as Designated Safeguarding Lead), Second Master, Bursar, and HR Director and the HR Advisers, and their personal, confidential secretaries.

All employees including volunteers will be subject to an enhanced level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. There may be occasions when a DBS clearance has failed to arrive before an employee of the School begins work. In these situations, the employee may commence employment without an enhanced DBS disclosure as long as all other checks have been carried out (including identity, right to work in the UK, consideration from previous employer, satisfactory references and a check of the Children's Barred List) and a risk assessment focusing on adequate supervision arrangements before a member of staff can begin work. This needs to be reviewed after two weeks if the DBS has not been received and the relevant manager updated to ensure continued supervision.

In the case of a Housemaster on appointment, his spouse, and adult children living in boarding accommodation (or children on reaching 16), will all be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Governors will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Non-cleared persons accompanying School visits involving day trips and overnight accommodation, including the spouses of members of staff or other family members over the age of 18, will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

It is the responsibility of those organising trips to ensure that the relevant personnel e.g. volunteers, have been cleared before they are allowed to work with, associate with, or supervise children. It is also the responsibility of the trip organiser to check that employees of any Outward-Bound Centre (or similar venue) visited have been vetted by their own organisation.

New DBS Checks

Staff who have not worked for a period of 3 months or more will be required to complete a new DBS check prior to completing further work, unless:

1. they have been absent for reasons relating to sickness, maternity, paternity, parental leave, professional leave or another similar reason; or
2. they have a current subscription to the DBS Update Service, which can be checked by the HR Department prior to the staff member returning to work.

DBS Update Service

Staff may be signed up to the DBS Update Service as part of the DBS application process. In particular, this may include Teaching staff, Recre8 staff and other casual staff whose may work at infrequent intervals. There is no defined list of roles which will be eligible to be signed up to the DBS Update Service; consideration will be given to the nature of the post and other factors, such as the availability of work in various departments.

A subscription to the DBS Update Service is valid for 12 months from the date of issue of the DBS Certificate. The individual staff member will receive email or text notification from the DBS 30 days prior to the renewal date, advising that they must log in and renew the subscription to keep it valid, if they wish to do so. The School will normally reimburse the subscription fee to current staff members upon receipt of proof of renewal, which will include an online status check by the School at the same time.

Staff who have not worked for three months and are registered with the DBS Update Service will be subject to an online status check. The HR Department will make an online status check before the staff member takes up any work to ensure that their DBS certificate is valid.

The School reserves the right to complete online status checks via the DBS Update Service at regular intervals for those signed up to the DBS Update Service. By maintaining their subscription to the DBS Update Service, staff members acknowledge this and are considered to have consented to such checks. In the case of any new information found following an online status check, the School will require the staff member to complete a new DBS check.

Certain contractors' staff (e.g. those who maintain fire alarms) require access to School premises including boarding houses in term-time. Such firms/persons will be identified by the Estates Director or HoD, with the staff they nominate being subject to an enhanced DBS check if they are likely to have regular, unescorted access to the School or houses, together with the opportunity to have contact with boys.

Housemasters utilising the services of taxi firms for the movement of boys for any reason are to ensure that they utilise the services of either Castle Cars (01732 363637), Skyline Airport Taxi Service (01732 400200 / 01892 804020), Just Minibuses (07836 679119) Black Square Executive Cars (01732 300022/07544 855098), and Beeline Taxis 09 Ltd. All companies hold Local Authority Licenses and have undertaken to ensure that only drivers holding enhanced DBS checks will be employed. In making any such bookings, this requirement should, as a matter of routine, be re-emphasised.

The School's HR Department, will be responsible for initiating, checking, and recording all DBS checks, and for notifying Heads of Departments when such clearance is received. Heads of Departments must ensure that they do in fact receive this notification.

Any member of staff who engages the services of a person to work at the School, whether paid or unpaid, who requires a DBS check (as described above) without completing the necessary checks may be subject to the School's Disciplinary process.