

Thames Hightech Ltd

Safer Recruitment Policy 2025/26

*Registered address: Hurlingham Studio, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PA
Owner: Yuhong Li | Review cycle: Annual | Applies to: staff, volunteers, contracted staff, local coordinators and homestays*

Thames Hightech Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Safer recruitment is one of the key ways in which we seek to deter, reject or identify people who may be unsuitable to work with children or to host students in their homes.

This policy sets out the recruitment and vetting procedures used by Thames Hightech Ltd for all roles involving contact with children, including employed staff, contracted staff, volunteers, local coordinators and homestays. It should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Staff and Homestay Code of Conduct, Low Level Concerns Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and relevant contracts and role descriptions.

This policy is informed by AEGIS Quality Standards September 2025 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Part Three. Right to work checks are carried out in line with current Home Office guidance.

1. Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Recruitment decisions must be based on suitability, safeguarding culture, skills, experience and professional judgement.
- No applicant will be treated unfairly on the grounds of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.
- Any person involved in recruitment who has a close personal or family relationship with an applicant must declare it immediately and take no part in the decision-making process.
- All appointments are conditional until the required pre-appointment checks have been completed satisfactorily.

2. Scope

This policy applies to recruitment, selection, vetting, appointment, induction and ongoing suitability monitoring for:

- Directors and employed staff
- Self-employed or contracted staff engaged in student support
- Volunteers
- Local coordinators / guardians
- Homestays, including adult household members and any regular overnight adult visitors where checks are required
- Any other adult engaged by Thames Hightech Ltd in regulated activity or with substantial access to children

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Director / DSL has overall responsibility for ensuring that recruitment arrangements are safe, lawful and properly recorded. At least one person involved in shortlisting or interview should have appropriate safer recruitment knowledge. Recruitment records, vetting records and the Single Central Record (SCR) are maintained securely and reviewed periodically.

4. Recruitment and selection process for staff and contracted personnel

4.1 Planning and advertising

- Each vacancy is supported by a role description and, where appropriate, a person specification.
- Advertisements and recruitment materials make clear Thames Hightech Ltd's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Recruitment materials explain that successful applicants will be subject to identity checks, right to work checks where relevant, references, self-declaration and an enhanced DBS check where required.

4.2 Application stage

- Applicants must complete the organisation's application form. A CV may be submitted in addition, but not in place of, the application form.
- The application form requires full name, previous names, address history, date of birth, National Insurance number where relevant, employment and education history in chronological order, qualifications, details of referees and explanations for gaps.
- Applicants are required to declare any relationships to existing staff or decision-makers.

4.3 Shortlisting

- Applications are scrutinised for completeness, consistency, unexplained gaps, anomalies or repeated moves that require clarification.
- Shortlisted applicants may be asked to complete a self-declaration relating to criminal record information, barring, professional sanctions and suitability to work with children, in line with current legal guidance.
- An online search may be carried out on shortlisted candidates as part of due diligence. Any relevant issue identified will be explored with the applicant at interview.

4.4 References

- At least two references will normally be obtained, including the current or most recent employer where possible.
- References will be obtained directly from the referee and not accepted as open testimonials or from relatives.
- References should comment on suitability to work with children, professional conduct, disciplinary concerns and any child protection concerns where relevant.
- Any vague, contradictory or concerning information will be verified and followed up before appointment is confirmed.

4.5 Interview

- Interviews will normally be conducted by at least two people.
- The interview will explore professional suitability, motivation to work with children, safeguarding understanding, boundaries, resilience, values and any issues arising from the application, references or online search.
- Applicants must bring original identity and qualification documents where relevant.

5. Pre-appointment checks for staff and contracted personnel

Before a person starts work, Thames Hightech Ltd will complete the checks that are relevant to the role. These may include:

- Verification of identity from original documents.
- Right to work in the UK checks in line with Home Office requirements.
- Verification of address.
- Verification of qualifications or professional status where these are required for the role.
- An enhanced DBS certificate and barred list check where the role amounts to regulated activity with children.
- Consideration of overseas police checks, certificates of good conduct or other checks where the applicant has lived or worked outside the UK.

- Health / medical self-declaration or other proportionate fitness check relevant to the role.
- Receipt and review of satisfactory references.
- Self-declaration regarding criminal record or suitability issues.

A person will not be allowed to begin unsupervised work with children until all essential checks have been satisfactorily completed. If exceptionally an individual starts before a DBS certificate is returned, this will only be after risk assessment, completion of all other checks, appropriate supervision and a decision by the Director/DSL. Such arrangements will be exceptional and time-limited.

6. Recruitment and vetting of homestays

Homestays are recruited and assessed through a safeguarding-led process designed for host families and private homes.

6.1 Initial enquiry and application

- Prospective homestays complete the organisation's homestay application form and provide full household details.
- All adult household members, and any adult who regularly stays overnight during periods when students may be present, must be declared.
- The homestay pack explains the safeguarding expectations, accommodation standards, checks required and the need for honesty and ongoing disclosure.

6.2 References and identity

- References are sought for the primary carers. As a minimum, Thames Hightech Ltd will normally obtain one professional and one personal reference for each primary carer, or another combination that gives equivalent assurance.
- Identity, address and where relevant right to work documents are checked.
- Applicants complete relevant self-declarations and medical / suitability forms.

6.3 Home assessment

- A home visit is carried out before approval. This includes interview, inspection of accommodation, discussion of family composition, house rules, transport arrangements, pets, smoking, supervision and safeguarding understanding.
- Accommodation suitability is assessed against Thames Hightech Ltd requirements and AEGIS expectations, including sleeping arrangements, privacy, study space, bathrooms, food provision, household safety and general suitability.

6.4 DBS and household checks

- Enhanced DBS checks are obtained for adult household members where required by the role and regulatory context.
- The organisation records who lives in the household and expects homestays to notify any change in household composition, regular visitors, criminal matters, investigations or other relevant changes immediately.
- No homestay placement is confirmed until the required safeguarding checks are complete and the home has been approved.

7. Overseas checks

Where an applicant or relevant adult has lived or worked outside the UK, Thames Hightech Ltd will consider what additional checks are necessary. These may include police certificates, certificates of good conduct, professional references, employment verification, translated documentation or other proportionate checks. The organisation will record what was requested and the rationale for decisions taken.

8. Recording

Thames Hightech Ltd maintains a Single Central Record and related vetting records for staff, contracted personnel and homestays. Records will be stored securely and accessed only by authorised personnel. The organisation will record the date a check was completed, the outcome, and any follow-up action. Copies of identity and right to work documents will be retained in accordance with legal requirements and data protection obligations.

9. Induction and ongoing monitoring

- All newly appointed staff, contracted personnel and homestays receive induction appropriate to their role.
- Induction includes safeguarding and child protection, code of conduct, low level concerns, whistleblowing, reporting routes, online safety, emergency procedures and role-specific expectations.
- Suitability is an ongoing matter. Thames Hightech Ltd expects all relevant adults to disclose any change in circumstances that may affect their suitability, including criminal investigations, convictions, cautions, significant health issues, complaints, regulatory action, changes in household composition or material changes in accommodation.
- Homestays are subject to ongoing monitoring and review, including periodic visits and updated checks where necessary.

10. Use of agency staff, third parties and transport providers

Where Thames Hightech Ltd uses third parties, it will seek assurance that suitable recruitment and safeguarding checks have been completed. For transport providers, the organisation will take reasonable steps to verify identity, suitability, driving status, insurance and any other relevant safety information before arranging student transport.

11. Data protection and confidentiality

Recruitment and vetting information is personal data and will be processed fairly, lawfully and securely in line with the organisation's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice. Only those who need access for safeguarding, recruitment or compliance purposes will be given access.

12. Concerns identified during recruitment or after appointment

Any concern about an applicant's or appointee's suitability will be considered carefully and, where necessary, discussed with the DSL/Director. Thames Hightech Ltd may withdraw an offer, suspend a recruitment process, impose additional safeguards, or make referrals to the police, DBS, LADO, local authority or other agencies where required by law or safeguarding duties.

13. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, AEGIS requirements or organisational practice changes.

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