

STAFF RECRUITMENT POLICY 2026

Forming part of Giant Steps Tasmania's *Personnel Manual*

Policy Statement

Giant Steps Tasmania considers that its staff are its most valuable asset. It also puts the health, safety and wellbeing of its students at the centre of everything it does. The school therefore believes it is essential that it attracts and retains staff of the highest calibre, not only in terms of their pedagogy and knowledge, but also in terms of their practical commitment to child safety and wellbeing.

Giant Steps Tasmania has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns are treated seriously and investigated carefully. The school is committed to creating a safe, respectful and inclusive school environment where all students can be happy, confident and resilient. The school respects the diversity of all students and their needs in relation to their culture, identity and disability.

Any physical contact with students is always appropriate to the delivery of the curriculum and services delivered at Giant Steps and based on the needs of the individual student.

Giant Steps Tasmania follows Equal Opportunity guidelines for appointment to all positions and selects the best applicant on the basis of merit. Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination legislation guides the decision-making process.

The recruitment of teaching staff at Giant Steps Tasmania is informed by the Teachers Registration Act 2000 and the Department of Children and Young People (DECYP)'s requirements regarding annual Safeguarding Training.

Purpose

This policy explains the recruitment processes that Giant Steps Tasmania has in place to help ensure the most suitable applicants are employed and that Giant Steps Tasmania is a safe environment for its students. Each step in the process is carried out consistently and thoroughly. The steps are as follows:

- establishing job descriptions & selection criteria
- advertising
- setting up a selection committee/ interviewing panel
- screening of applications
- face-to-face interviews that include behavioural-based questions and questions about motives for wanting to work with children
- Pre-Employment Checks (Working with Vulnerable People Check, Police Record check (including international police record checks where necessary), Reference checks over the telephone with recent line managers and Additional Checks)
- probation period (including the use of Induction materials and mentoring)

This policy covers all positions within the school which involve paid employment.

Implementation

Job Descriptions & Selection Criteria

Giant Steps Tasmania ensures that all its job descriptions and selection criteria:

- clearly state the role and duties that the successful applicant would be required to undertake
- clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant
- outline the supervision and accountability processes in place at Giant Steps which support child safety
- include the necessity to meet the needs of children with a disability
- include the necessity to meet the needs of students with Aboriginal heritage
- include the necessity to ensure cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- are written in clear, unambiguous, inclusive language

Advertising

All advertised positions at Giant Steps Tasmania include the following wording:

“Giant Steps Tasmania actively promotes the safety and wellbeing of all its students, and all school staff are committed to protecting students from abuse or harm in accordance with the school’s ethos, their legal obligations and duty of care. Giant Steps Tasmania promotes the safety, participation and empowerment of all of its students, irrespective of disability, cultural or linguistic heritage. Applicants are encouraged to detail experience they have of working with students with disability and/ or who are from diverse cultural and/ or linguistic backgrounds, their families and communities.”

All advertised positions at Giant Steps Tasmania:

- refer to the School’s ethos
- refer to the school’s Staff Professional Conduct Policy and let applicants know how they can access it.
- inform applicants that rigorous reference and background checks will be undertaken, including Working with Vulnerable People and Police Record checks

Setting up a selection committee/ interviewing panel

The selection committee has a minimum of 2 members reviewing all applications and interviewing applicants. All committee members are required to declare any conflict of interest. The committee is led by the Selection Panel Chair (usually the Principal or their delegate) and is comprised of other appropriate staff members. In some cases the committee may include non-staff members (e.g. Board members, Parents/ Carers).

If a relative or friend of an existing staff member, Board member or parent/ carer applies for a position within the school, then that existing staff member, Board member, parent/ carer is ineligible to be on the selection panel. In addition, if the applicant is appointed, the existing staff member cannot be placed in a supervisory or mentoring role with their relative/ friend.

Screening of applications

All applications are reviewed against the selection criteria and position description. Applicants whom the selection committee deems to be most suitable are selected for an interview.

Face-to-Face Interviews

The selection committee conducts interviews for candidates who have been short-listed. The selection committee chair ensures that the interview is consistent with selection criteria and any relevant legislation.

All candidates are requested to bring a current Working with Vulnerable People card to their interview.

All interviews include questions relating to safeguarding children. The selection committee uses open-ended, behavioural-based questioning to provide insight into the applicant's values, attitudes and understanding of professional boundaries and accountability. These questions may include:

‘Tell us about why you want to work with children?’

‘Describe a time when you had to manage a child whose behaviour you found challenging?’

‘Tell us about a time when you had to comfort a distressed child?’

The selection committee is also alert to:

- Unexplained lengthy gaps in employment history
- If the applicant says they do not value or ‘need’ supervision
- If the applicant is evasive or inconsistent in their answers

Giant Steps Tasmania recognizes that while it might be uncomfortable for Selection Committee members and applicants to discuss criminal convictions, it is an important step in safeguarding students. To help introduce this difficult topic, the committee chair might say to the applicant that the committee has some specific questions about child safety because the school takes safeguarding very seriously. The applicant would then be asked if they have any criminal convictions, formal disciplinary action taken against them, or any finding of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Once the selection committee has appointed a successful candidate, the Principal or their delegate notifies any unsuccessful candidates. Unsuccessful candidates are asked if their applications can be kept on file. If they agree, these applications are kept securely and remain confidential. If they refuse, their applications are destroyed.

Pre-employment checks

Giant Steps Tasmania uses pre-employment checks as an additional means to prevent unsuitable people from joining the organisation. The pre-employment checks are:

- Working With Vulnerable People Card
- National Police Certificate (obtained within 3 months prior to commencing employment at Giant Steps)
- Referee Checks
- Additional Checks

Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) Card

All staff, volunteers, and visiting allied health therapists are required to hold a current working with vulnerable people (WWVP) registration without restrictions.

Contractors entering the school between the hours of 8:45am-3:15pm are also required to hold a WWVP registration without restrictions.

Administration assistants file a copy of the WWVP card for all staff, volunteers, visiting allied

health therapists and contractors and ensure their WWVP registration details are added to the WWVP portal. WWVP registrations are checked when the details are added to the portal to ensure registration is current and without restriction, prior to the individual entering the school. Any issues with an individual's registration status are reported to the principal immediately.

National Police Certificate

The Police Check must be carried out a maximum of 3 months prior to commencing employment at Giant Steps Tasmania.

A check is made of the police records held in all Australian police jurisdictions.

Because the applicant is seeking employment in a school, all convictions and findings of guilt will appear on their National Police Certificate.

Overseas applicants are also required to have police checks carried out in their country of origin.

Referee Checks

Potential employees are always asked to provide details of at least two referees who can provide information about the applicant's character and skills. These referees must have a professional relationship with the applicant. (i.e. a line manager, not a colleague or friend). It is expected that one of these referees will be the applicant's most recent line manager. Where this is not possible, the applicant will be asked to explain why. Ideally one of the referees should be able to provide information on the applicant's experience of working with children. The Principal or their delegate will contact at least two of the referees by phone and will establish:

- how long the applicant and referee worked together
- the specifics of the position the applicant occupied
- the applicant's perceived strengths and weaknesses
- how the applicant behaved in specific situations
- whether the referee would hire the person again, particularly in a role working with children, and
- whether they have any concerns about the applicant working with children

Additional checks

Applicants attending for interview may also be asked to bring with them documentation that:

- Proves their identity (e.g. driver's licence/passport)
- Proves they are suitably qualified (e.g. originals or certified copies of the applicant's qualifications)
- Proves they have received any necessary vaccinations.

Probation period

Giant Steps Tasmania believes the probation period has a very useful role to play in allowing the school to assess a new staff member's performance and suitability before confirming their permanent employment, as well as allowing the new staff member the opportunity to see if the role and the organisation suits them.

During the probation period a new staff member in a therapeutic or classroom-based role is allocated a Mentor and with their mentor's assistance works through a set of Induction Materials that includes work on Safeguarding and Child Protection (see also: **Staff Induction Policy**). A

probation period offers an opportunity for the new staff member and their line manager to set goals and identify training, supervision and other support needs.

The length of probation periods can vary, but are usually between three and six months. In consultation with the new staff member, the Principal may allocate closer supervision and/ or additional training during the probation period to support the new staff member.

Authorised by:	Paul Bowman
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Date:	
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