



## **SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Shrewsbury School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

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

- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- 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 including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2023 (KCSIE), Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (HM Government, April 2021); and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- to ensure that the School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

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

The School has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2023 and Prevent Duty Guidance).

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.

The school aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at Shrewsbury School.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of the governing body to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor the school's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster, Bursar and other Managers involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school.
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

The governing body has delegated responsibility to the Headmaster (teaching staff) and Bursar (support staff) to lead in all appointments. School governors may be involved in staff appointments but the final decision will rest with the Headmaster/Bursar.

## **Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency**

Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of the School will amount to "regulated activity" if it carries out:

- a) teaching, training, instructing, caring for (see (c) below) or supervising children if the person is unsupervised, or providing advice or guidance on physical, emotional or educational well-being, or driving a vehicle only for children;
- b) work for a limited range of establishments with the opportunity for contact with children, but not including work done by supervised volunteers.

Work under (a) or (b) is regulated activity only if done regularly. Some activities are always regulated activities, regardless of frequency or whether they are supervised or not. This includes:

- c) relevant personal care, or health care provided by or provided under the supervision of a health care professional: o personal care includes helping a child with eating and drinking for reasons of illness or disability or in connection with toileting, washing, bathing and dressing for reasons of age, illness or disability;
- d) health care means care for children provided by, or under the direction or supervision of, a regulated health care professional.

Regulated activity will not be:

- paid work in specified places which is occasional and temporary and does not involve teaching, training; and
- supervised activity which is paid in non-specified settings such as youth clubs, sports clubs etc.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid/voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis.

The School is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The School is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the School can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

### **Advertising**

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This would also include safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and personal specification.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA18).

### **Application Forms**

Shrewsbury School uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history). Applicants submitting an incomplete application form will not be shortlisted.

The application form will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. CVs will not be accepted in place of an application form.

It is unlawful for the School to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at the School. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.

### **Job Descriptions and Person Specifications**

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job. The person specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children in a boarding environment.

### **Shortlisting**

The shortlisting process will be carried out by two people.

### **Online Search**

An online search will be performed for all shortlisted candidates to identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and may be publicly available online. If anything has been identified the interviewing officers will explore further with the applicant during the interview. The date the search was performed and results of the online search will be kept on the successful candidates personal file. Candidates are informed of these online checks in the Recruitment Packs, and in the invite to interview letter.

### **References**

References for short-listed applicants will be sent for immediately after short-listing. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up after the interview, if the applicant is successful.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which 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 reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be

sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be 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 will also be asked to confirm they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children.

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by telephone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference.

The School does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

### **Interviews**

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria.

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted and photocopies will be taken. Unsuccessful applicant documents will be destroyed 6 months after the recruitment programme.

### **OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS**

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE and the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the *Boarding schools: national minimum standards* the School carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

All offers of employment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the statutory safer recruitment checks. The conditional offer of employment will be subject on the following:

- the agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the School's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- verification of the applicant's identity (if not previously been verified), to include, if possible a copy of the applicant's birth certificate.
- the receipt of at least two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the School considers to be satisfactory;
- for positions which involve "teaching work":
  - i. the School being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency (formerly National College for Teaching and Leadership), or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working at the School or

which, in the School's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the School; and

- ii. the School being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at the School or which, in the School's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the School;
- where the position amounts to "regulated activity" the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the School considers to be satisfactory;
  - where the position amounts to "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List<sup>1</sup>;
  - confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education at a school, taking part in the management of an independent school or working in a position which involves regular contact with children;
  - confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from being involved in the management of an independent school;
  - verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role, including verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities.
  - verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
  - any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK; and
  - verification of professional qualifications which the School deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where not previously verified), including verification of QTS status via the TRA Employer Access Service.

Whether a position amounts to "regulated activity" must therefore be considered by the School in order to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in nearly all cases the School will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

#### **The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974**

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position at Shrewsbury School.

#### **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check**

The School applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the

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<sup>1</sup> *The School is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The School is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the School can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.*

School which amount to "regulated activity" as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is the School's policy that the DBS disclosure **must be** obtained before the commencement of employment of **any** new employee.

It is the School's policy to re-check employees' DBS Certificates every three years and in addition any employee who takes an employment break for more than three months must be re-checked before they return back to work.

Members of staff at Shrewsbury School are aware of their obligation to inform the Bursar or the HR Department of any cautions or convictions that arise between these checks taking place.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

### **Portability of DBS Certificates Checks**

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £13 per annum, which is payable by the applicant.

This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers. The School will:

- Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search.
- Confirm the original certificate matches the individual's identity.
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, i.e. enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.

The Update check would identify and advise whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial Certificate was issued. Applicants will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

### **DBS Certificate**

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers, therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificate to the Human Resources Department, The Bursary, Kingsland House.

### **Dealing with convictions**

The school operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions. Please also see 'Recruitment of Ex-offenders' policy and procedure.

Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

- the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence;
- how long ago the offence occurred;
- one-off or history of offences;
- changes in circumstances,
- decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with the Head of Human Resources. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that 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 Head of Human Resources will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. 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.

### **Secretary of State Prohibition Orders (Teaching & Management roles)**

In all cases where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind, a Prohibition Order check will be made using the Employer Access Online Service. It is anticipated that this will be performed at offer stage. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in such a setting.

Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by the Teaching Regulation Agency. Pending such consideration, the Secretary of State may issue an interim prohibition order if it is considered to be in the public interest to do so. A section 128 direction 39 prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an independent school.

A person who is prohibited is unable to participate in any management of an independent school, a governor on any governing body in an independent school, or a management position that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities. A check for a section 128 direction will be carried out using the Teacher Services' system. Where the person will be engaging in regulated activity, a DBS barred list check will also identify any section 128 direction.

### **Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status.**

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The School does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

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.

In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

### **Medical Fitness**

The School is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the School, **after** an offer of employment has been made but **before** the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report / occupational health report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role.

The School is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

### **Overseas checks**

The School, in accordance with the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) will, if applicable, sponsor new foreign nationals (see Certificate of Sponsorship section).

In addition, applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal records check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by the School.

### **Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS)**

If an appointed applicant is a national of a non-EEA country, a CoS may be required. Before any offer of employment is made, the Interviewing Managers should consult with the Human Resources Department to establish whether the school has any unallocated Sponsorship Certificates.

Only the Human Resources Department will be able to issue a CoS. In addition to the CoS the applicant must apply for entry clearance/leave to remain through the UKVI and comply with the UKVI requirements.

The process can take up to three months and staff cannot, under any circumstances, be employed until permission is given.

Detailed advice on the above is available from the Human Resources Department.

### **Induction Programme**

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, and KCSIE, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

### **Single Centralised Record of Members of Staff**

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 requirements. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Human Resources Department in Kingsland House. The Single Centralised Record will contain details of the following:-

- all employees who are employed to work at the school;
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly or through an agency;
- Governors as members of a proprietorial body.
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members.

A designated Governor will be responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Record and reporting his/her findings to the full Governing Body during the Summer Term meeting.

### **Record Retention/Data Protection**

The School is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, 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 the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the School to discharge its obligations as an employer, e.g. so that the School may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by the School for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the School. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Human Resources Office in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with School activities.

Shrewsbury School will retain interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (i.e. shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) [DPA18].

### **Ongoing Employment**

Shrewsbury School recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will therefore



provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

### **Leaving Employment at Shrewsbury School**

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely, there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks the School also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- has applied for a position at the School despite being barred from working with children; or
- has been removed by the School from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the School may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

### **Contractors and agency staff**

Contractors engaged by the School must complete the same checks for their employees that the School is required to complete for its staff. The School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the Contractor can commence work at the School.

Agencies who supply staff to the School must also complete the pre-employment checks which the School would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the School requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the School.

The School will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or an agency in and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at the School.

### **Visiting Speakers (and Prevent Duty)**

The Prevent Duty Guidance requires the School to have clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers, whether invited by staff or by pupils, are suitable and appropriately supervised.

The School is not permitted to obtain a DBS disclosure or Children's Barred List information on any visiting speaker who does not engage in regulated activity at the School or perform any other regular duties for or on behalf of the School.

All visiting speakers will be subject to the School's usual visitors signing in protocol [Security on Site Policy]. This will include signing in and out at Reception, the wearing of a visitor's badge at all times and being escorted by a fully vetted member of staff between appointments.

The School will also obtain such formal or informal background information about a visiting speaker as is reasonable in the circumstances to decide whether to invite and/or permit a speaker to attend the School. In doing so, the School will always have regard to the Visitors and Security Policy, the Prevent Duty Guidance and the definition of "extremism" set out in KCSIE which states:

*"'Extremism' is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations."*

In fulfilling its Prevent Duty obligations the School does not discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age.

## **Volunteers**

The School will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils at or on behalf of the School (the definition of regulated activity set out above will be applied to all volunteers).

Under no circumstances will the School permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

It is the School's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with the School for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the School on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the School to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition the School will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Head of Human Resources will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the school. This will be undertaken through regular audits of the recruitment process, of personal files and reporting to the designated Governor responsible for auditing the Single Centralised Record and reporting their findings to the full Governing Body during the Summer Term meeting.

**Owner:** D Pender - Head of Human Resources  
Reviewed September 2023  
Next review September 2024



## SAFER RECRUITMENT EVALUATION CHECKLIST

<b>Policy and Procedure</b>	<b>In Place</b>	<b>Not in Place</b>	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Safer Recruitment Policy updated and monitored on a regular basis	✓			
Consistency in recruitment procedures applied to all categories of employment	✓			
Use of application Form	✓			
Use of Job Description & Person Specification	✓			
Referees asked to specifically comment on suitability of applicant	✓			
Two written references taken up	✓			
Online Searches carried out, and candidates informed of these checks	✓			
One member of panel to examine references prior to interview	✓			
References followed up by a telephone reference	✓			
References to be obtained for volunteers/supply/agency staff	✓			
Questions asked on applicant's child protection awareness	✓			
Explanation of gaps in employment	✓			
Proof of identity sought – originals not copies	✓			
Academic qualification checked – originals not copies	✓			
Medical clearance prior to employment	✓			
No employment until DBS Certificate has been completed and original disclosure received	✓			
Above checks applied as appropriate to Overseas staff, supply/agency staff/gap/volunteers	✓			
Panel interviews undertaken	✓			
Formal induction programme undertaken	✓			
Child Protection training/issue of Child Protection policy, Code of Conduct and Part One of KCSIE to new employee	✓			