



# ISH RECRUITMENT POLICY

<b>1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Purpose and equal opportunities.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. Catalysts in Recruitment.....	5
2.2. Equal opportunities.....	5
2.3. Prevention of Favouritism and Predetermined Appointments.....	6
<b>3. Roles and responsibilities.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. Recruitment Process Overview.....</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1. Advertising and Job Descriptions.....	7
4.2. Application Process.....	8
4.3. Handling Applications and Shortlisting.....	8
4.4. Shortlisting Panel Composition.....	9
4.5. Shortlisting Process.....	10
Interviews.....	10
Appointments.....	10
4.6. Substitutes and Interns.....	11
Substitutes.....	11
Interns.....	11
4.7. Emergency, Leave Replacement, Pilot and Redeployment Appointments.....	11
Unforeseen or Emergency Situations.....	11
Extending Leave Replacements.....	11
Pilot Projects: Purpose, Process, and People.....	12
Redeployment.....	12
Legal Compliance and Oversight.....	12
4.8. Limitation on Multiple Internal Paid Roles.....	12
Exemptions to the One-Role Limit.....	13
Transition and Implementation.....	13
Temporary Additional Roles.....	14
Prioritising Part-Time Staff.....	14
Balancing Flexibility and Fairness.....	14
<b>5. Interview process.....</b>	<b>14</b>
5.1. Interview Pack.....	14
5.2. Teaching Component for Teacher Appointments.....	15
5.3. Candidate Queries.....	15
5.4. Virtual Interviews.....	15
5.5. Interview Programme.....	15
5.6. Core Questions.....	15
5.7. Document Verification and Expenses.....	16
<b>6. Candidate Selection.....</b>	<b>16</b>
6.1. Final selection meeting.....	16
6.2. Contacting References.....	16
6.3. Offer and Appointment Process.....	16
Letter of Appointment and Written Acceptance.....	17
Provisional Nature of the Offer.....	17
Reference Requirement and Exceptions.....	17

Regret Notifications and Unsuccessful Candidates.....	17
Handling Declined Offers.....	17
Ensuring a Transparent and Equitable Process.....	18
<b>7. New employee administration and induction.....</b>	<b>18</b>
7.1. Pre-employment vetting checks.....	18
7.2. The single central record.....	18
7.3. Vetting checks (Identification, Criminal Background, Qualifications, Disqualification, Overseas Applicants).....	18
Identification and Background Checks.....	18
Criminal Background Checks.....	19
Qualifications.....	19
Additional Checks for Applicants Who Have Lived Abroad.....	20
<b>8. Orientation and Ongoing Employment.....</b>	<b>20</b>
8.1. Medical Fitness and Occupational Health.....	20
8.2. Staff Induction Training.....	20
8.3. Record Retention and Data Protection.....	20
8.4. Ongoing Employment.....	21
8.5. Monitoring.....	21
<b>9. End of Employment and Use of Contractors.....</b>	<b>21</b>
9.1. Contractor Compliance with Safeguarding Regulations.....	21
9.2. Volunteers.....	22
9.3. Visiting Speakers, Virtual Guests and Professionals.....	22
Visiting Speakers and Virtual Guests.....	22
Visiting Professionals.....	22
9.4. Board Members.....	23
<b>Key Documents and sources of information.....</b>	<b>23</b>
Legal Acts and Regulations.....	23
International Standards and Best Practices.....	23
Internal School Documents (Unpublished).....	24
School Policies and Strategic Documents.....	24
Attachment 1—Hiring for a senior Leadership position.....	25
Attachment 2 - Conditions for substitution.....	27

## 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

This recruitment policy aligns with the **International School of Helsinki (ISH)** vision to “**empower and inspire one another to take thoughtful action.**” It supports ISH's mission to be **inclusive, challenging, and engaged**, ensuring that our recruitment practices reflect these principles and foster a vibrant, dynamic community of learners and educators.

This policy is further aligned with our accrediting bodies, including the International Baccalaureate (IB), the Council of International Schools (CIS), and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). The entire ISH community—board, leadership, teachers, students, and parents—supports this document as a reinforcement of our commitment to safeguarding, child protection, and the holistic development of each student and our commitment to belonging and DEIJ principles.

This recruitment policy ensures that the school remains a leader in international education, attracting and retaining staff dedicated to supporting ISH's mission, vision, and catalyst and contributing to the school's and its students' ongoing success.

## 2. Purpose and equal opportunities

This recruitment and selection policy has been developed in alignment with the guidelines of the **International Child Protection and Safeguarding Task Force** and the applicable regulations of the **Finland Employment Contracts Act (Työsopimuslaki)**. It ensures compliance with the law in the selection and employment of personnel, including private education institutions like the International School of Helsinki. The policy is designed to guide recruitment across all school sections in line with our board policies.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the **safe recruitment** of staff in line with child protection and safeguarding standards.
- Conduct the recruitment process **fairly, transparently, and non-discriminately**, complying with equal treatment provisions in Finnish law.
- Ensure the process is **efficient and cost-effective**, promoting the sustainability of school operations.
- Guarantee that those responsible for recruitment demonstrate a professional approach, handling each stage with **honesty, integrity, and fairness** towards internal and external applicants.

The school is committed to attracting, selecting, and retaining the best possible employees who will positively contribute to the learning environment at ISH. Under the Employment Contracts Act, the recruitment process follows **legal standards for employment contracts**, ensuring that all agreements are made based on mutual consent and have clear terms of employment, including trial periods and conditions for termination, where applicable.

A **motivated and committed workforce** with the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience is essential for the school's performance and high-quality teaching and learning delivery. The recruitment and selection process aims to identify individuals who align with the school's vision and mission and its catalysts and whose abilities, qualifications, experience, and merit match the job

description and person specification. This ensures that every hire supports the school's vision and contributes to the continuous improvement of the ISH community.

## 2.1. Catalysts in Recruitment

At ISH, the recruitment process is shaped by our four core catalysts, ensuring that we attract and select individuals who embody these values and contribute meaningfully to our community:

- **Wellbeing:** We prioritise the recruitment of staff who foster comfort, health, and happiness for all community members. Candidates are assessed on their ability to support a nurturing environment, emphasise community building, promote social and emotional development, and ensure balance in the well-being of students and colleagues.
- **Autonomy:** We seek individuals skilled at making thoughtful, meaningful decisions that align with our educational goals. Candidates should demonstrate a commitment to high expectations, personal growth, and self-actualisation, both in their own development and in guiding students to achieve their fullest potential.
- **Belonging:** We aim to hire staff who value diversity and inclusivity, ensuring that all individuals within the ISH community feel respected and appreciated. Our recruitment process emphasises candidates' ability to foster collaboration and individualisation and create an environment where every person feels valued for their unique contributions.
- **Connection:** We look for candidates who understand their role within a global context and are committed to helping students connect their learning to the wider world. This includes encouraging experiences that broaden perspectives, deepen empathy, promote responsibility, and seek purpose beyond the classroom.

Note: We assess how candidates demonstrate these catalysts throughout the recruitment process. This happens through their application documents, structured interview questions that explore real examples, and reference checks. Where relevant, we also include the catalysts in our reference requests to ensure candidates align with ISH's values.

## 2.2. Equal opportunities

The **International School of Helsinki (ISH)** is committed to providing **equal opportunities**—as specified in our board policy—for all candidates and ensuring that every stage of the recruitment and selection process is conducted fairly, following the principles outlined in the relevant equality legislation.

At ISH, we are committed to a fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory recruitment process. All recruitment activities—including shortlisting, interviewing, and selection—are conducted without bias or discrimination based on **race, skin colour, ethnicity, caste, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual identity, national origin, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, political views, political activity, beliefs, opinion, age, language, family structures, physical abilities, disabilities, neurodiversity, health, pregnancy or maternity, childbirth, marital or civil partnership status, or trade union membership, or other personal reasons** (Non-discrimination Act (1325/2014) and Act on Equality between Women and Men [609/1986]).

**Candidates with disabilities** will not be excluded unless they are unable to perform a duty that is intrinsic to the role after all **reasonable adjustments** have been considered. ISH is committed to making reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of a disability. This includes modifying the recruitment process or environment to accommodate individual needs in compliance with Finnish law on equality and non-discrimination.

The school's recruitment policy upholds the **principles of fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. It ensures that all candidates are evaluated based on their qualifications, merit and suitability and** given an equal opportunity to succeed in the application process.

### 2.3. Prevention of Favouritism and Predetermined Appointments

The International School of Helsinki is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, and competitive recruitment process, ensuring that all qualified applicants are treated equitably and given an equal opportunity to apply for and be considered for employment. To uphold these principles, the school has implemented the following guidelines to prevent any form of favouritism or predetermined appointments:

- **Merit-based Selection:** All recruitment decisions will be made based solely on the merit of the applicant's qualifications, experience, and suitability for the position. The process must strictly adhere to the job description and person specification, and decisions must be supported by clear, documented evidence from the recruitment process.
- **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Any staff member involved in the recruitment process, particularly line managers, must declare any personal relationships or potential conflicts of interest they may have with any candidates. If a conflict of interest exists, the staff member will be excluded from participating in the position's shortlisting, interviewing, and decision-making processes.
- **Shortlisting and Interview Panel:** Where possible, shortlisting and interview panels will include multiple staff members, ensuring decisions are not made unilaterally by one individual.
- **Monitoring and Oversight:** The HR team will oversee all stages of the recruitment process to ensure compliance with this policy. Any deviations from the process or concerns about favouritism must be reported immediately to the Head of the school.
- **Prohibition of Predetermined Candidates:** Offering or preparing a position for a predetermined candidate without conducting an open and competitive recruitment process is strictly prohibited. This includes any actions or communications that suggest a role has been reserved for a particular individual.
- **Legal Compliance:** This policy aligns with equal opportunity laws, ensuring all candidates are treated fairly. The school will take disciplinary action, including nullifying any appointment, where it is found that favouritism or predetermined decisions have influenced the recruitment process.

- **Employment of Spouses:** In line with Finnish employment law, ISH recognises that spouses may work within the same organisation. However, one spouse cannot directly supervise or act as the line manager of the other. Wherever possible, such situations should be avoided. If unavoidable, alternative reporting structures will be put in place to maintain fairness and professionalism.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

The Board, the head of the school, and the Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring that the school has adequate policies and procedures in place for recruiting all staff, contractors, volunteers, and agency workers in compliance with legal requirements and relevant guidance. This responsibility also includes the ongoing monitoring of compliance with these policies.

The leadership team and other individuals involved in recruitment must ensure that the school operates with **safer recruitment** procedures. This includes conducting all necessary checks on staff, contractors, agency workers, and volunteers before employment or volunteering. Additionally, the team is responsible for overseeing the compliance of contractors and agencies with this policy and for promoting the welfare of children and young people throughout every stage of the recruitment process.

The HR team must ensure that required criminal record checks are obtained at the beginning of each new employment. This applies to all new staff members, including those returning to the school after a break of six months or more. New employees are encouraged to obtain and present a criminal record check before or on the first days of employment. Short-term staff, from whom ISH is not permitted to require a criminal record check, or employees recruited with short notice, may begin work before the receipt of a satisfactory criminal record check is shown.

### 4. Recruitment Process Overview

#### 4.1. Advertising and Job Descriptions

The school must advertise vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicants as possible. This usually entails internal and external advertisements in relevant publications or websites, including the school's website. Any advertisement will include a clear statement of the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and a reference to the required Criminal Background check.

In addition to external advertising, all vacancies shall be made known to the present employees to ensure anyone who believes he/she/they is qualified for a position may apply and be equally considered.

Applicants are made aware that providing false information constitutes an offence and may result in the rejection of the application or, if discovered after hiring, may lead to termination of employment in accordance with Finnish labour law. In such cases, referral to the police and relevant professional regulatory bodies may also be considered.

The job description outlines the general nature of the post, including the primary duties and responsibilities and will identify the post's line manager. It also incorporates the person

specification (qualifications, attributes, and skills required), which is used as short-listing criteria by those scrutinising the applications. Other information included is a description of the school and/or department, background information about the post, and further details such as closing date.

#### 4.2. Application Process

Prospective applicants are requested to provide the following:

- A full, up-to-date CV plus other requirements stipulated in the job advertisement such as letter of applications.
- A purposely written letter of application, the length of which will be specified based on the nature of the position. The letter should describe how the candidate's skills, experience, and expertise match the requirements of the role.
- The application letter should also outline the applicant's suitability to work in alignment with the school's vision, mission, and values.
- Employment History: Applicants must account for any gaps in their employment history and provide explanations where necessary. This ensures transparency and supports safeguarding measures while recognising that career transitions are a natural part of professional growth.

#### 4.3. Handling Applications and Shortlisting

ISH recognises different types of hiring where the appropriate process is different. The process description is separately identified for the following categories of hiring:

- Leadership positions (see Annexe 1)
- Teachers
- Support Staff
- Short-term temporary needs
- New internal roles
- Applications submitted online will receive an automated acknowledgement email from the HR team.
- All applications will be initially reviewed by a staff member who specialises in and oversees the confidential handling of such documents.
- Only complete applications will be processed.
- The school's usual policy is not to allow individual visits from prospective applicants before shortlisting or interviewing. However, in some instances, all candidates may be offered the opportunity to visit as part of the shortlisting process.
- Those involved in the shortlisting process are responsible for carefully scrutinising application forms and letters of application. If any anomalies are noticed, a written note should be made to document these concerns.
- The HR team will be responsible for collating a list of all applications as they are received.
- The HR team will also ensure that each application undergoes thorough scrutiny in line with safer recruitment guidelines before the interview stage. This includes reviewing a full, continuous record of the candidate's employment history as provided by the candidate, with particular attention to any gaps. Any such gaps should be clarified with the candidate before or during the interview. All information must be obtained directly from the applicant and handled in accordance with applicable data protection regulations.



- This scrutiny will form part of the safeguarding-related questions during the formal interview process.

References of applicants who meet the short-listing criteria will be taken up, where possible, before the interview. Referees are sent the following:

- Standard letter via email
- Name of the candidates, their approval to contact them and the position for which they are applying.
- School standard reference template should be completed in addition to any written reference provided.

References must include the most recent employer and, if relevant, the most recent employer who has known the candidate working with children. Open references or references solely character references from close family members or friends are not acceptable.

Where a reference appears inadequate or incomplete, invites further contact, or contains conflicting information, a designated staff member should telephone the person in question to investigate further.

#### 4.4. Shortlisting Panel Composition

After the closing date, a **shortlisting panel** will be formed to independently review applications using a **selection matrix** that cross-references candidates against the job description and person specification.

- The shortlisting panel must consist of at least **two people** for internal appointments to ensure fairness and objectivity.
- For **teacher appointments**, the shortlisting panel will typically consist of **three to four people** and should include:
  - **A staff member from the relevant curriculum area**, chosen by colleagues from that area.
  - **An Instructional Leader or a Learning Collaborator (LC)** who will be directly working with the candidate.
  - **A member of the Leadership Team**, providing leadership oversight.
  - **Additional panel members** may be included as needed to ensure a thorough and fair evaluation.

If a panel member has previously worked with a candidate but not with other applicants, this **must be disclosed** at the start of the process to determine whether it poses a conflict of interest. The school will assess each case individually to maintain fairness and transparency in the selection process.

All panel members must declare any potential **conflicts of interest** and will not participate if a conflict is identified.

#### 4.5. Shortlisting Process

The shortlisting panel will meet within two weeks after the application closing date to draw up the final shortlist. Candidates will be selected based on merit and their alignment with the role's requirements, ensuring no favouritism or predetermined outcomes influence the decision.

To support fairness and consistency, the shortlisting process includes:

- **Selection Matrix:** A structured selection matrix is used to assess candidates objectively against the job description and person specification.
- **Multiple Panel Members:** Shortlisting decisions are made collectively to minimise individual bias.
- **Conflict of Interest Declarations:** Panel members must disclose any prior working relationships with candidates so that potential biases can be assessed and managed.
- **HR Oversight:** The HR team monitors the process to uphold recruitment policy guidelines and best practices.
- **Head of School Approval for Appointments:** Before any internal hire is confirmed, the Head of School reviews the decision to verify that the process has been conducted per policy expectations.

All shortlisted candidates will be invited to a final interview which will be conducted in accordance with the school's commitment to fairness, transparency, and compliance with equal opportunities laws.

#### Interviews

Community interviews of one or more days may occur during the recruitment process for leadership roles. These interviews allow candidates to engage with various stakeholders within the school, including staff, students, and other members of the school community. They are designed to allow the broader community to assess the candidate's fit with the school's culture and values.

Feedback from community interviews will be collected and considered as part of the overall assessment. Still, it will not replace the final interview panel's formal decision-making process.

For **leadership roles other than the Head of School**, the **final interview panel** will typically include:

- **The Head of School.**
- **Two members of the Leadership Team.**
- **One staff member** who will work closely with the role.
- When relevant, a **union representative**.
- A **board member** for governance oversight.
- Where appropriate, a **student representative** (optional for certain leadership roles).

#### Appointments

ISH follows Finland's **Decree on Qualification Requirements for Teaching Staff when hiring teachers**, ensuring that all teachers meet the required qualifications. The Decree also allows schools to hire non-qualified teachers under specific conditions, particularly when no qualified candidates are available.

If a non-qualified candidate is appointed on a temporary basis, the school will document the reasons for the decision. This record, added to the individual's personnel file, will include details on the qualifications of other applicants, as well as the relevant skills and experience of the selected candidate.

#### 4.6. Substitutes and Interns

##### **Substitutes**

ISH maintains a pool of substitutes for teachers and educational assistants to ensure that short-term absences do not disrupt learning or compromise student safety. Applications for substitute positions are accepted throughout the year, and the school follows an expedited process for adding candidates to the list, meaning steps 4.4 to 4.6 may be skipped.

Substitutes are interviewed by the appropriate programme leads. While ISH prioritises candidates with the relevant qualifications, as outlined in Board Policy 5.4, prior experience as a substitute teacher is also valued. All substitutes must read and agree to comply with ISH's Child Safeguarding Policy.

Once added to the substitute list, they may be offered short-term employment as needed. When a substitute receives their first offer, they are provided with the employment terms (Attachment 2).

##### **Interns**

ISH welcomes interns from accredited institutions, provided an ISH staff member agrees to supervise them. Interns must be pursuing studies that align with the school's needs and must complete a simple interview conducted by the relevant programme lead for educational interns or the potential supervisor for other roles.

Before beginning their placement, an agreement is signed between ISH and the sending institution. Interns are also required to read and agree to the Child Safeguarding Policy and, if their internship duration allows, provide a criminal record check. Interns may assist in educational activities but must always work under the supervision of an ISH staff member.

#### 4.7. Emergency, Leave Replacement, Pilot and Redeployment Appointments

##### **Unforeseen or Emergency Situations**

The head of school has the authority to make temporary or redeployment appointments in cases of unexpected staff absences, legal requirements, underperformance concerns, or other operational emergencies. These decisions help maintain the quality of education and safeguarding standards while ensuring the school remains fully operational.

##### **Extending Leave Replacements**

If an employee's leave of absence is extended, their temporary replacement may also have their contract extended without reopening the position, provided they have demonstrated strong performance and hold the necessary qualifications. This decision is made at the discretion of the Head of School.

### Pilot Projects: Purpose, Process, and People

At ISH, we believe in continuously exploring new ideas to enhance learning and support our strategic goals. One way we do this is through **pilot projects**—temporary initiatives designed to address specific needs or test innovative approaches before making long-term commitments. These projects typically run for up to two years and are carefully evaluated to determine their impact and future direction.

To start a pilot project, a **proposal** is required. This outlines the purpose, goals, and expected benefits of the project, ensuring it aligns with the school's vision. Once approved, a project leader is appointed to oversee the work and guide the team through the process.

Since pilot projects are experimental, the people participating in them play a key role in driving progress. They are expected to **demonstrate clear achievements and measurable impact** throughout the project's duration. The **Head of School** regularly checks in to ensure things are on track and that the initiative is making a meaningful difference.

If a pilot project proves successful and becomes a permanent part of the school, the person or persons driving the project may continue in their role on a permanent basis, or transition into the next phase of the initiative without opening the position to new candidates. However, as needs evolve, ISH may also seek a different skill set to take the project forward. In such cases, we are committed to a **fair and transparent evaluation process** that recognizes the contributions of the current leader while ensuring the best fit for the next stage of development.

Ultimately, pilot projects at ISH are about **learning, growth, and innovation**—not just for the school, but for the people involved. We approach them with curiosity, flexibility, and a commitment to doing what is best for our students and community.

### **Redeployment**

Redeployment may be used as a long-term solution when a staff member's role is no longer suitable, whether due to underperformance or changing operational needs. The process is handled in consultation with HR and follows Finnish labour laws to ensure fairness. Decisions are based on school needs, performance evaluations, and legal considerations.

### **Legal Compliance and Oversight**

All temporary and redeployment appointments comply with the Finnish Employment Contracts Act (Työsopimuslaki), including all necessary vetting and background checks. The Head of School ensures that relevant parties, such as the Leadership Team and HR, are informed of emergency, temporary, or redeployment appointments to maintain transparency and compliance with internal processes.

### 4.8. Limitation on Multiple Internal Paid Roles

This policy applies to teaching staff members who receive additional compensation for taking on responsibilities beyond their full-time teaching quota, in accordance with the provisions outlined in Chapter 6 and the relevant annexes of the Collective Agreement for the Private Teaching Sector. The policy will take effect from the 2024–2025 academic year and is intended to provide clarity regarding the number of additional roles that staff members can hold while ensuring fair access to

professional development and leadership opportunities.

To maintain fairness and prevent an excessive accumulation of roles, staff may hold one additional compensated role alongside their main contractual position. In exceptional circumstances, where specific expertise is required to meet operational needs, a second additional internal paid role may be approved. The purpose of this policy is to balance the distribution of roles and ensure that opportunities for professional growth and leadership are available equitably across the school community.

### Exemptions to the One-Role Limit

Some roles are not counted within the one-role limit due to their essential function in supporting students, school operations, or broader institutional priorities. These roles include:

- Homeroom advisor roles (Koti, Kota, Maja, Core Advisor), which are an integral part of the school's pastoral care system, supporting student well-being and academic guidance. These roles are embedded within the teaching structure and are therefore not considered an additional paid responsibility.
- Committee, working group, and representative roles that serve a defined school-wide purpose. These positions typically require a limited time commitment while contributing to key school initiatives, community engagement, or strategic planning. Examples include:
  - The DEIJ working group, which requires a small time commitment and plays a vital role in ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in school-wide discussions and initiatives.
  - Staff representation roles chosen by the Employees: shop stewards, Occupational Health and Safety officer position and Board staff representative.

The school recognises that future committees, working groups, or representative roles may be established to support evolving needs, strategic initiatives, or governance objectives. Any new committee or working group that serves a broader institutional function may be considered for exemption from the one-role limit. These decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the purpose of the role, the time commitment involved, and its overall benefit to the school community.

### Transition and Implementation

To ensure a smooth transition to this policy, the school will honour any existing additional paid roles that exceed this new stipulation for the duration of their agreed term. The policy will take full effect once those roles reach their designated end date.

Moving forward, any staff member holding more than two additional paid roles must align with this policy. If a staff member applies for a new internal role, they must resign from any additional paid role(s) exceeding the limit unless the Head of School grants a temporary exception. This approach ensures that no staff member holds more than two additional compensated roles at any given time, providing clarity and balance in the distribution of responsibilities.

### Temporary Additional Roles

In certain situations, operational demands may require staff to temporarily take on an additional compensated role. In these cases, the Head of School may approve a temporary appointment for a specified period. Temporary roles will be regularly reviewed to assess their necessity and impact on school operations.

If the need for the temporary role extends beyond its initial period, the position will be reassessed. If it remains necessary, the role will be advertised and filled through the school's standard recruitment process, ensuring that all interested and qualified candidates have the opportunity to apply.

### Prioritising Part-Time Staff

When appointing staff to additional roles, priority will be given to part-time staff where appropriate, in accordance with Employment Contracts Act Chapter 2, 5 §. This ensures that part-time employees have equitable access to professional growth opportunities while maintaining a balanced distribution of responsibilities within the school.

### Balancing Flexibility and Fairness

This policy provides a structured yet flexible approach to additional paid roles, allowing the school to meet its operational needs while ensuring that leadership and professional development opportunities are accessible to a broad range of staff. By maintaining clear guidelines and fair processes, ISH aims to foster a supportive and professional work environment where responsibilities are distributed in a way that benefits both staff members and the broader school community.

## **5. Interview process**

All short-listed candidates are contacted by email to invite them to an interview and ensure their availability. The school recruitment team will complete this.

### 5.1. Interview Pack

The interview pack should include the following:

- The interview programme indicates the schedule and format of the interview.
- Face-to-face or virtual format: It should clearly indicate whether the interview will be conducted in person or virtually, depending on the candidate's location and other logistical considerations.
- A copy of the school's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- If the interview is conducted at the school, a detailed programme will be provided, including:
  - Tour guides led by senior students.
  - Potential class visits or observations (where applicable).

## 5.2. Teaching Component for Teacher Appointments

Teaching a lesson is an essential aspect of the process for making a **teaching appointment**, although it is not compulsory. Depending on the circumstances, candidates may be asked to either:

- Teach a lesson as part of the interview process.
- Submit a **lesson plan** before the interview, which will be reviewed and discussed during the interview.

Teaching candidates will receive information in advance, providing the context and content of the lesson to be taught (if required) or guidelines for submitting a lesson plan.

## 5.3. Candidate Queries

Candidates will have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the interview process, including specifics on the teaching component.

## 5.4. Virtual Interviews

While the school does not generally offer telephone interviews, **virtual interviews** are appropriate, especially if the candidate is applying from abroad. In a virtual interview, the candidate may be asked to share teaching materials and lesson plans or deliver a mock lesson virtually.

## 5.5. Interview Programme

The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to meet the job description and person specification, assessing both professional skills and suitability for the role.

In order to further explore fit with ISH, a **face-to-face interview** may include:

- A **tour of the department** or the area where the individual will work.
- A **lesson demonstration** for teaching posts (usually observed by a head of department or team leader). A **lesson plan** may be submitted beforehand and discussed during the interview.
- A **test relevant to the post** or the lesson plan preparation within a set time limit (if applicable).
- **Coffee and/or lunch** with staff members of the department or associated departments

To ensure compliance with safeguarding protocols, each interview process must include at least **one person** who has successfully completed **Safer Recruitment training**.

## 5.6. Core Questions

All interviewers will agree upon core questions before the interview. These will cover the required competencies for the role and any specific areas related to the candidate's application.

During the interview, Candidates will be required to:

- Explain any **gaps in employment** or significant periods spent working or living abroad.
- Provide explanations for any **anomalies or discrepancies** in the information submitted during the application process.



- Declare any information that may appear on the criminal background check required for working with children, such as relevant convictions or cautions, in accordance with applicable legislation.
- Demonstrate their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

### 5.7. Document Verification and Expenses

The recruitment team will scrutinise and check relevant qualifications and other necessary documentation during the interview. Copies will be made, dated, and initiated to verify that the originals have been seen.

Any information regarding past disciplinary actions, allegations, cautions, or convictions will be discussed in detail, and the circumstances of the individual case will be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Where relevant, reasonable travel expenses for travel are paid to applicants invited for a visit. Candidates provided with expense claim forms to complete should return them (with receipts) to the Business Office for payment.

## **6. Candidate Selection**

### 6.1. Final selection meeting

This meeting is held as soon as possible after the interviews of short-listed candidates are finished. It involves all those involved in the selection/interview process. A record of decision-making to appoint an individual ahead of others must be noted to ensure that there is a record to provide clear, honest feedback to the unsuccessful candidate/s if required.

Interviewers bring any notes they have made with them (including lesson observations if applicable); these are collected and placed with the application file at the end of the process. All notes and other material provided by candidates who were not selected are retained for 12 months from the date of notifying the decision, after which they are deleted—unless a discrimination claim or other legal process is pending or anticipated. This retention period ensures compliance with applicable legislation and supports the employer's ability to respond to any claims within the statutory period.

### 6.2. Contacting References

References may be contacted only subject to candidate's explicit consent. If there are any queries about information provided on a reference, a verbal contact must be gained from the references, ensuring that we are speaking directly with the references. If due to time difference or for other reason the reference cannot be reasonably reached, they can be contacted by email to their work email address. We must question the areas on the reference that require further clarification and evaluate the response.

### 6.3. Offer and Appointment Process

A member of the Leadership Team will email the successful candidate as soon as possible after the final interview. The initial email will confirm their selection and outline the next steps, including when they can expect to receive the letter of appointment and employment contract.



### Letter of Appointment and Written Acceptance

Before a candidate is expected to provide written acceptance, they will be sent a letter of appointment detailing key terms such as salary, benefits, and contract duration. This ensures that candidates have all necessary information before making a decision. Where possible, a draft contract may also be provided upon request to ensure transparency in the hiring process.

Once the candidate has reviewed the appointment details and provided written acceptance, the HR department will draft the final employment contract. The Head of School will approve and sign the contract before it is officially issued to the candidate.

### Provisional Nature of the Offer

Both verbal and written offers will state that the offer is provisional, subject to:

- Receipt of three satisfactory references (if references were not obtained before the interview).
- Completion of all required background checks, including:
  - Police check.
  - Verification of identity (passport, ID).
  - Proof of right to work in Finland (if applicable).
  - Copies of relevant qualifications.

### Reference Requirement and Exceptions

For international child protection and safeguarding compliance, three satisfactory references are required before finalising an appointment. If obtaining three references proves challenging, any exceptions must be approved by the Head of School and properly documented. The expectation is that at least one reference must come from a recent employer, and all referees must be professionally relevant to the candidate's role.

### Regret Notifications and Unsuccessful Candidates

Once the candidate's written acceptance has been received and the offer confirmed, the recruitment team will send regret notifications to non-shortlisted applicants.

Candidates who were interviewed but not selected are generally not contacted individually unless they request feedback. This is clearly stated during the application process to manage expectations. However, where appropriate, general feedback may be provided to unsuccessful candidates upon request.

### Handling Declined Offers

If the successful candidate declines the offer, the selection committee will reconvene to assess whether to extend the offer to another shortlisted candidate. If no other candidate is deemed suitable, the position may be re-advertised, or an interim appointment may be considered, subject to operational needs.

## Ensuring a Transparent and Equitable Process

This approach ensures that candidates have full transparency regarding their offer, that safeguarding and legal requirements are met, and that unsuccessful candidates are treated with professionalism and respect.

## **7. New employee administration and induction**

A personal HR file will track and audit paperwork obtained using the information collected so far. This checklist will be retained on individual files.

### 7.1. Pre-employment vetting checks

A new appointee should only commence employment once all criteria have been met. The process of checking qualifications, verifying identity and prohibitions, and assessing a newly appointed staff member's suitability must be logged carefully on their new staff file.

All teachers and managers will be checked for the following:

- those who have been prohibited from teaching
- those who have failed to complete their induction or probation period successfully
- Those that may be the subject of a suspension or conditional order imposed by the law of a country that is still current.

### 7.2. The single central record

In addition to maintaining individual personnel files and various staff records, a centralised electronic record of recruitment and criminal background checks is held with the Business Office. This information is retained for as long as it is considered current and relevant. The HR team is responsible for keeping this record up to date.

The single central record contains 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
- All others who the school has chosen to have regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff, and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for students who are not staff members, e.g., sports coaches.

### 7.3. Vetting checks (Identification, Criminal Background, Qualifications, Disqualification, Overseas Applicants)

#### Identification and Background Checks

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring identification documentation, such as an ID card, passport, residence permit, or other valid documents to prove eligibility to work in Finland. Copies of these original documents will be made, dated, signed, and securely stored in the employee's personnel file in compliance with GDPR regulations.

If a successful candidate does not have a valid criminal record check in place (as per the

three-month rule), the recruitment team will remind them to immediately obtain a criminal background check from the **Legal Register Centre** with the threat of ending employment. The check should be initiated as soon as practicable but at least three months from the employment commencement date.

The school's policy is to **re-check employees' criminal backgrounds** if they are re-hired after a break for more than six months (e.g., career breaks). Staff must inform the **Head of School** of any cautions, convictions, or changes in their personal circumstances.

### Criminal Background Checks

In Finland, it is illegal for schools to employ anyone with a criminal record that includes serious offences, particularly those related to children, in roles involving access to minors. Under the **Act on Checking the Criminal Background of Persons Working with Children (504/2002)**, all individuals working with children must provide a criminal record extract.

The school must ensure all staff members working with children undergo criminal background checks through the **Legal Register Centre**. This process ensures that individuals with relevant convictions are prohibited from working in positions involving children's care, instruction, or supervision.

Employers must verify that the criminal record check is completed before any new hire begins work with children, in accordance with Finnish law. Criminal record checks may only be requested at the beginning of the employment relationship.

### Qualifications

In compliance with Finnish employment law, new employees may be required to present original documents or certificates of relevant registration, training, or qualifications as part of the recruitment process. The school will verify these original documents; copies will be securely stored in the employee's personnel file. Once verification is complete, the originals will be promptly returned to the employee.

These documents will be collected and stored under **Finnish data protection laws**, including the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**. Only data that is necessary for the role will be collected, and it will be securely stored and protected to ensure confidentiality.

### Disqualification

Under **Finnish law**, staff working with children are subject to strict background checks to ensure their suitability. Employees at ISH are expected to maintain high standards of conduct and moral values. If an applicant has a criminal record, this will not automatically disqualify them from employment. Each case will be reviewed fairly, considering the nature of the offence and its relevance to the role. Any staff member whose circumstances change in a way that could affect their ability to work with children (for example, if they are involved in criminal proceedings or receive a conviction) must immediately inform the **Head of School** via email.

Employees are responsible for keeping the school informed of any personal changes that could impact their role, particularly those related to child safeguarding. **All staff will receive annual**

**written reminders** of this requirement to ensure compliance.

#### Additional Checks for Applicants Who Have Lived Abroad

The police check must be submitted **before the applicant begins working with children**, in compliance with Finland's **Act on Checking the Criminal Background of Persons Working with Children (504/2002)**. If the check cannot be completed in time, the applicant must provide proof that the criminal background check has been applied for and complete other necessary checks (such as identity verification).

Until the criminal background check is received, the new hire will be subject to additional supervision and monitoring per the school's risk assessment plan process, ensuring compliance with **child safeguarding regulations**.

## **8. Orientation and Ongoing Employment**

### 8.1. Medical Fitness and Occupational Health

In accordance with Finnish occupational health regulations, all staff must maintain an appropriate level of health and fitness to perform their duties safely and effectively. The school provides occupational healthcare to support employees with **preventative health services and assessments**, particularly for roles involving responsibility for children or vulnerable individuals.

Employees are responsible for informing the school of any health changes that could affect their ability to carry out their duties. If a health condition compromises workplace safety, the employee must notify the **Head of School immediately**.

The school may require **health checks** to verify an employee's ability to continue in their role safely and to comply with occupational health laws and child safeguarding regulations.

### 8.2. Staff Induction Training

All new staff members will complete an **induction programme** to ensure they understand their responsibilities and the school's policies. This includes:

- **An induction meeting** and briefing with their **line manager and/or HR team**.
- **Safeguarding training**, including child protection responsibilities.
- **Review of key policies**, including the **safeguarding policy** and **staff code of conduct**.
- **Health and safety training**, relevant to their role.
- **Completion of a written induction checklist** for each role they take at the school.

### 8.3. Record Retention and Data Protection

In accordance with GDPR guidelines, all interview notes and personal data related to all applicants will be deleted 12 months from completion of the recruitment process. This retention period ensures compliance with non-discrimination legislation, which allows candidates up to one year to

file a claim, and enables the school to contact applicants or review the process if necessary. After 12 months, all personal data related to non-selected candidates, including interview notes, will be securely destroyed (e.g., shredded) to ensure full compliance with data protection regulations.

The school does not process any information about an individual's criminal convictions. The School will only check the criminal record statement, and document a date of the record. Should the record contain a conviction, ISH can hold the record until it has time to process action based on this information.. Other data collected during recruitment is held securely and is accessed by, and disclosed to authorised individuals solely to complete the recruitment process.

Inappropriate access to or disclosure of employee data constitutes a **data breach** and must be reported in line with the organisation's data protection policy. Such breaches may also constitute a disciplinary offence and will be handled under the school's disciplinary procedure.

#### 8.4. Ongoing Employment

Safer recruitment is an ongoing responsibility. The school will provide regular training and support to staff, ensuring continued awareness of safeguarding practices and essential policies.

#### 8.5. Monitoring

The **Leadership Team** and **HR manager** are responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy. This will be done through formal audits of job vacancies and an annual safer recruitment evaluation, which will be presented to the **Head of School** for reporting to the board. The **Leadership Team** is also responsible for overseeing this policy and the **single central register**.

### **9. End of Employment and Use of Contractors**

All staff leaving employment will be invited to an exit interview, during which an exit questionnaire will be completed. The **HR manager** will retain this for monitoring purposes and include it in the individual's personnel file.

#### 9.1. Contractor Compliance with Safeguarding Regulations

All **contractors** working within the school must comply with the school's **safeguarding and safer recruitment regulations**. Upon arrival, the relevant staff member will verify each contractor's **identity** to ensure safety and compliance.

Contractors engaged in **long-term projects** within the school are subject to the same **background checks** as regular staff. This includes **criminal background checks**, conducted in accordance with Finland's **Act on Checking the Criminal Background of Persons Working with Children (504/2002)**. These checks will be recorded and managed securely in compliance with **GDPR regulations**.

Before commencing work, a **written agreement** between the school and the **contractor's agency** must confirm that all required **background checks** have been completed for employees working at ISH. This includes a **criminal background check** through the **Legal Register Centre**, verifying the absence of disqualifying offences.

A record of these checks will be maintained in the school's **single central register**. If any concerns arise from the background check, the **HR team** will conduct a **risk assessment**. Contractors will only be permitted to begin work once clearance is granted.

Upon arrival, an **identity check** will be conducted to ensure that the individual sent by the agency matches the documentation provided. Any information related to past offences or cautions will be handled with **strict confidentiality**.

## 9.2. Volunteers

Volunteers working within the school must receive authorisation from the **Head of School** before beginning their duties. Volunteers will be assessed to determine whether they are in a **regulated activity** with children. If so, they will be required to complete identity checks, an informal interview, and provide a criminal record extract from the **Legal Register Centre** as mandated by the **Act on Checking the Criminal Background of Volunteers Working with Children (148/2014)**.

Criminal record checks are generally not required for **one-off volunteers** assisting with events such as day outings or school concerts. However, they must be supervised with children and must not undertake personal care duties. A **risk assessment** will be conducted to ensure the safety of students in these situations.

Regular volunteers will receive a **letter of agreement** confirming they will not be asked to take sole responsibility for individual pupils or groups. They will always have the support and supervision of a designated staff member.

All volunteers must read and acknowledge the school's **Child Safeguarding Policy**, confirming their understanding in writing.

## 9.3. Visiting Speakers, Virtual Guests and Professionals

### Visiting Speakers and Virtual Guests

Visiting speakers are not subject to formal recruitment checks since they are not typically left alone with students. However, the school remains responsible for ensuring that all visiting speakers—whether in person or virtual—are appropriately supervised and that their content aligns with the school's values and safeguarding policies.

A member of the **Leadership Team** must approve invitations to visiting speakers and virtual guests to ensure their suitability. No criminal record checks are required as long as the speaker is not left alone with students.

**Virtual visits, such as guest speakers joining via Zoom or other platforms, follow the same guidelines as in-person visits.** These guests must be pre-approved, appropriately supervised, and their participation must be aligned with ISH's values and safeguarding expectations.

### Visiting Professionals

Visiting professionals, such as healthcare providers, sports instructors, or trainee teachers, must verify their **identity** upon arrival. The organisation employing these professionals (e.g., an agency

or hospital) must provide **written confirmation** that all necessary background checks, including **criminal record checks**, have been completed if they will work directly with children.

The school will retain these confirmations for compliance but is **not responsible** for conducting the background checks if the employing organisation has already done so.

#### 9.4. Board Members

Criminal background checks are required for board members if they are directly involved in managing or caring for children, as outlined by Finland's **Act on Checking the Criminal Background of Persons Working with Children (504/2002)**. If board members are involved in childcare-related decision-making or volunteering, they will need additional safeguarding checks, but for general governance roles, these are not required.



## Key Documents and sources of information

This is a list of key documents that informed this policy:

### Legal Acts and Regulations

1. **Act on Checking the Criminal Background of Persons Working with Children (504/2002)**. Finnish Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/2002/eng/504> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
2. **Basic Education Act (628/1998)**. Finnish Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/1998/eng/628> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
3. **Data Protection Act (1050/2018)**. Finnish Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/2018/eng/1050> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
4. **Employment Contracts Act (55/2001)**. Finnish Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/2001/eng/55> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
5. **Equality Act (1325/2014)**. Finnish Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/2014/eng/1325> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
6. **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2016)**. European Parliament and Council. *Regulation (EU) 2016/679*. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
7. **Non-Discrimination Act (1325/2014)**. Finnish Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/2014/eng/1325> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
8. **Occupational Health Care Act (1383/2001)**. Finnish Ministry of Justice. Available at: <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/lainsaadanto/saadoskaannokset/2001/eng/1383> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
9. **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2012)**. European Union. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012P%2FTXT> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
10. **Proposal for a Regulation to Prevent and Combat Child Sexual Abuse (2022)**. European Commission. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A209%3AFIN> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).

### International Standards and Best Practices

11. **Council of International Schools (CIS) (2021)**. *International Standards for Child Protection*. Available at: <https://www.cois.org/childprotection> (Accessed: 20 October 2024).
12. **Safer Recruitment Consortium (2021)**. *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with Children and Young People in Education Settings*. Available at: <https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).



13. **UNICEF (2021).** *Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child: Addressing the challenges of the 21st century.* Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eu/european-union-strategy-rights-child> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
14. **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights and Council of Europe (2015).** *Handbook on European law relating to the rights of the child.* Available at: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/handbook-european-law-relating-rights-child/> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).

### Internal School Documents (Unpublished)

15. **International School of Helsinki (2024).** *Board of Governors Handbook.* May 2024. Internal school document.
16. **International School of Helsinki (2024).** *Child Safeguarding Policy & Procedures.* August 2024. Internal school document.
17. **International School of Helsinki (2024).** *Recruitment Policy.* Internal school document.
18. **International School of Helsinki (2024).** *Whistleblowing Policy.* October 2024. Internal school document.

### School Policies and Strategic Documents

19. **International School of Helsinki (2024).** *Mission and Vision.* Available at: <https://ishelsinki.fi/mission-vision/> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).
20. **International School of Helsinki (2024).** *Strategic Plan.* Available at: <https://ishelsinki.fi/strategic-plan/> (Accessed: 11 March 2025).

## Attachment 1 - Hiring for a senior Leadership position

Hiring for a senior Leadership position (excludes Head of School, who is hired by the Board)	
Advertising	<p>Advertised in paid advertising sites</p> <p>If deemed necessary, foreign hires search sites</p> <p>Internally advertised to allow growth opportunities</p>
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full, up-to-date CV.</li> <li>• A purposely written letter of application, the length of which will be specified based on the nature of the position. The letter should describe how the candidate's skills, experience, and expertise match the requirements of the role.</li> <li>• The application letter should also outline the applicant's suitability to work in alignment with the school's vision, mission, and values.</li> <li>• Applicants must account for gaps or discrepancies in their employment history and provide reasons for moving between roles.</li> <li>• Note that incomplete applications, as stipulated in the job advertisement, will not be considered.</li> </ul>
Reference checks	<p>From shortlisted candidates (max 2-4 persons).</p> <p>References checked preferably from 3 different employers, or in the minimum 3 different representatives</p>
Shortlisting panel	<p>After application closing date, a <b>shortlisting panel</b> will be formed to independently review applications using a <b>selection matrix</b> that cross-references candidates against the job description and person specification. Panel will consist of following members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Head of School.</b></li> <li>• <b>Leadership Team.</b></li> <li>• <b>One staff member</b> who will work closely with the role.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, a <b>student representative</b> (optional for certain leadership roles).</li> </ul> <p>All panel members must declare any potential <b>conflicts of interest</b> and will not participate if a conflict is identified.</p>
Interview and selection process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) initially shortlisted candidates interviewed by the shortlisting panel</li> <li>2) final shortlist created based on interviews</li> <li>3) Community interviews at appropriate extent</li> <li>4) Collecting feedback from all participating parties</li> <li>5) Shortlisting panel offer decision</li> </ol>
Employment offer and contract	<p>A <b>Leadership Team member</b> will email the <b>successful candidate</b> as soon as possible after the interview and confirm the employment offer.</p>

	<p>Once a <b>written acceptance</b> is received from the candidate, (and if <b>three satisfactory references</b> have been obtained), HR will go through terms of contract offered and share the contract electronically for signing; the selected candidate and Head of School sign employment contract.</p> <p>If for any reason, either due to school process and candidate hesitation, an employment contract cannot be immediately drafted, a written offer may be presented, signed by the <b>Head of School</b>.</p> <p>Both the verbal and written offers must state that the offer is <b>provisional</b>, subject to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>three satisfactory references</b> (if references were not obtained before the interview),</li> <li>• clean criminal record</li> <li>• <b>Verification of identity</b> (passport, ID),</li> <li>• Proof of <b>right to work in Finland</b> (if applicable) and</li> <li>• Copies of relevant <b>qualifications</b>.</li> </ul> <p>Once the <b>employment contract is signed</b>, the recruitment team will send <b>regret notifications</b> to non-shortlisted applicants.</p> <p>If the <b>successful candidate declines the offer</b>, the <b>selection committee</b> will reconvene to discuss it and potentially extend it to another candidate from the shortlist.</p>
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## Attachment 2 - Conditions for substitution

### **ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR SHORT TERM SUBSTITUTION EMPLOYMENTS OF 2 WEEKS OR LESS**

(last updated 31.10.2024)

1. The employer is International School of Helsinki (ID 0276078-3), based in Helsinki.
2. The place of work may be any of the Employer's campuses in Ruoholahti, Helsinki. If nothing further is specified, the place of work is the main building at Selkämerenkatu 11.
3. The agreement between the Employer and the Employee is created at the time when the Employee verbally, digitally or in writing agrees to assume the Substitute role requested by the Employer. Each separate substitution request creates a separate agreement.
4. The duration of the agreement is according to the verbal agreement between Parties at the time the work is requested by the Employer. Temporary basis is the absence of another employee, or other short-term need, as explained.
5. Probationary period is half of the agreed employment period.
6. Applicable Collective Agreement is followed. At the moment it is the [Collective Agreement for the Private Teaching Sector](#).
7. The salary is paid monthly according to collective agreement, on employers regular pay day. Hourly salary for substitute Educational Assistants is 24,01 €. The Substitute teacher whose qualifications have not been presented is paid €30,01 per teaching hour. Otherwise the hourly salary is based on Collective Agreement.
8. The Employer pays to the Substitute Educational Assistant Employee 9 % holiday pay, which is added on top of their hourly rate.
9. The Employee is entitled to statutory occupational health care during the duration of the employment. If the Employee needs to access occupational health services during the employment period, they should coordinate their needs with the Business Office.
10. The employee is entitled to school lunch during student school days, provided the employee is working for a full day, both prior to and following the ISH lunch period. There will be no cash remuneration in the event the above benefit is unused. The benefit is taxable.
11. The Employer pays to Keskinäinen Työeläkevakuutusyhtiö Elo or KEVA its statutory contribution to the Employee's pension. Employment accident insurance is in Keskinäinen Vakuutusyhtiö Fennia.