

# **SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**Authority Guidelines on Staffing Procedures for  
Community, Voluntary Controlled and Special Schools**

**Updated: Sept 2023**

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**Appendices - available in separate documents**

Appendix 1 - Planning Checklist

Appendix 2 - Reference Request Form

Appendix 3 - Positive DBS Disclosure Decision Form

## 1. Safer Recruitment Policy Statement

This Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy has been produced in line with the DfE guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (April 2011) and 'Keeping children safe in education guidance' (DfE June 2023). This policy aims to ensure both safe and fair recruitment and selection is always conducted.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral factor in recruitment and selection and is an essential part of creating safe environments for children and young people.

..... *School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment.*

It is the responsibility of the appointment panel to ensure that all the requirements of this document and relevant statutory guidance and legal requirements are applied fairly and consistently throughout the process.

Panel members must be willing to undertake the DfE Safer Recruitment Course offered by the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership.

## 2. Safer Recruitment and Selection Procedure

### 2.1 Constitution of the Staff Appointments Committee/Panel

The appointment of staff is the responsibility of the Governing Body but the Education Act 2002 which includes School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 states that the Headteacher may take the lead in making staff appointments outside the Leadership Group.

The Governing Body should, at its first meeting of the school year, nominate a Staff Appointments Committee/Panel to participate in the Recruitment and Selection process. This Committee/Panel will, by necessity, liaise closely with the School's Personnel Committee (or equivalent).

Membership - The Committee shall normally consist of the Headteacher and four named Governors and should ideally have a mix of genders.

The following membership is suggested; however, the Governing Body may vary this as it sees fit for any appointment.

<b>Appointment of</b>	<b>Staff Appointments Membership</b>
Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher	It is a statutory requirement for a Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher appointment that a minimum of 3 Governors (excluding the Headteacher) are involved at all stages of the process.  The Director of Children's Services (or nominated representative) is entitled to attend all proceedings and is under a duty to offer such advice as they consider appropriate. They do not, however, have a voting right.
Assistant Headteacher	Headteacher and one or more governors from the Staff Appointments Committee/ Panel.
All teaching posts	Headteacher and one or more governors from the Staff Appointments Committee/Panel.
More senior support staff, e.g. Business Manager	Headteacher and one or more governors from the Staff Appointments Committee/Panel
Support staff	Headteacher and one or more governors from the Staff Appointments Committee/Panel

### **Withdrawal from Meetings and Pecuniary Interest**

If a Committee/Panel member has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest he/she must declare the fact and take no part in discussions and withdraw from the panel. A committee member is treated as having a pecuniary interest if a relative or spouse living with him/her or is known personally to them.

A staff governor and the Headteacher (whether a Governor or not) are not considered as having a pecuniary interest any greater than that of other teachers at the school. However, if present when the appointment or promotion of himself/herself or a relative or a spouse is under consideration he/she shall take no part in the discussion and withdraw and not vote.

## **2.2 Planning**

It is important to plan any recruitment and selection process thoroughly. All panel members should be involved in the process from the start. It is a **mandatory requirement for at least one person involved in the interviewing of job applicants at the school to be trained in safer recruitment techniques.**

The panel should have a minimum of two members, but ideally three to deal with issues arising from a spilt decision.

The role of the panel is to:

- agree a timetable for recruitment process including shortlisting and interview dates

- review and/or develop the job descriptions
- review and/or develop the person specification
- agree the selection tools to be applied e.g. interview, observation, role play, in-tray exercise
- agree proposed interview questions for candidates
- agree the pack of information to be sent to the candidate (including information on the school's safeguarding policies and procedures)
- agree the content of the advert and where the post is to be advertised (including reference to the necessity for enhanced DBS Clearance)

All the activities listed above ***must happen prior to advertising a post.***

**NB** The panel must ensure that all job descriptions contain information about the safeguarding responsibilities specific job roles.

***Please see Planning Checklist – Appendix 1***

### **Appointing Volunteers**

In the appointment of a volunteer, the school should develop a role profile clearly outlining the role and expectations of the volunteer, including specific reference to responsibilities around safeguarding children.

### **2.3 Advertising a vacancy**

Normally a school may choose whether to advertise a post internally within school, on the Wirral Intranet, or externally in the press/relevant web site/via a recruitment agency. However, in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to only advertise within the school e.g.. where the recruitment of an external applicant may potentially lead to a redundancy.

***NB All Headteacher posts must be advertised externally unless in exceptional circumstances.***

Placing a statement in an advert that confirms the school's commitment to safeguarding is important to deter unsuitable people from applying for the job from the outset. This should include:

- the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- requirement for the successful applicant to hold an enhanced DBS disclosure
- information about the school's policy and practice in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare in the information supplied to applicants
- explanation that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 - this means that applicants are required to disclose details of any 'protected' criminal convictions, cautions or bind-overs they may have incurred

## 2.4 Receipt of Applications and shortlisting

Only applications which have been submitted on the standard application form should be considered for shortlisting by the appointments panel.

***NB CVs must not be used in any appointment process.***

All application forms should be scrutinised and the criteria for selection consistently applied to confirm whether the applicant meets the minimum essential criteria stated in the person specification in consideration for shortlisting.

In addition, the panel must also identify:

- any unexplained gaps in dates relating to education, employment and voluntary work
- any sections of the form which have not been completed such as criminal self-disclosure
- suitability of referees
- inconsistencies in information provided

Where issues have been identified, the appointments panel must decide if they are still willing to short list the candidate or explore the issues at the selection process stage.

***NB the appointments panel should not consider equality information and criminal self-disclosure forms at shortlisting stage of the appointments process. This information should be detached on receipt of the application form.***

Where there is an excessive number of applications which meet the minimum essential criteria, the appointments panel can review those applications against the desirable criteria to minimise the number of applications to be considered at selection stage.

On completion of this exercise the appointments panel should agree the applicants to be invited to the selection process.

## 2.5 References

Prior to the selection process, **all references** for shortlisted candidates **should be sought**, including those of internal applicants. Consideration may be given to candidates who do not wish their employer to be contacted prior to the selection process.

References will be sought directly from the referee and, where necessary, they will be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. Detailed written records should be kept of such exchanges.

If a candidate for a post working with children is not currently employed in a post working with children, a reference will be sought from the most recent employment in which the candidate has worked with children to confirm details of the candidate's employment and his/her reasons for leaving. If the candidate has not been employed working with children or young people, then it may be appropriate to seek a reference from any voluntary roles involving interaction with children or young people.

References are the "property" of the selection panel and strict confidentiality will be observed. Employer testimonials i.e. those provided by the candidate and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' should **never** be accepted. Should a candidate provide such a reference, the school must seek advice from their HR Consultancy provider.

References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. References from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the candidate must not be accepted.

It is also vital to compare the information about the applicant provided by the referee with the information the applicant has given about him or herself and his or her experience and background. If the references reveal any discrepancies or inconsistencies, or any doubts or concerns about the person's suitability, the issues should be followed up and explored with the referee. This is probably best done by telephone.

References are just as important for voluntary posts as for paid employment. However, prospective volunteers might not be employed or have previous experience of working with children. Nevertheless, it is important to make background enquiries and checks on volunteers as well as on paid staff.

***See Appendix 2 – reference request form***

## **2.6 Selection Process, including interview arrangements**

### **2.6.1 Interview arrangements**

All shortlisted applicants should be notified of the following in writing by letter or email, or in exceptional circumstances by telephone:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Selection tools to be used in interview

- Notification of any preparation required before interview such a presentation topic
- Requirement to bring all necessary paperwork e.g. qualifications, identification

***NB All necessary paperwork should be scrutinised by a suitable person, who can verify original documentation and photocopy to keep on file on the day of the selection process.***

## **2.6.2 Selection Process**

### **Value Based Interviewing (VBI)**

VBI is a way of helping organisations to recruit the most suitable people to work with children. It helps employers assess the values, motives and attitudes of those who are applying for jobs. It focuses on "how" and "why" an applicant makes choices in work and seeks to explore reasons for their behaviour.

VBI is about focusing on what a person does by exploring real historical examples and assessing information about their character (what makes them tick, what their pressure points are).

VBI allows recruiters to extract additional information about a candidate's personality and helps predict their behaviours on the job. VBI adds real value to the recruitment process without making it too complicated:

- Reduces or eliminates "gut feeling"
- Distinct focus on personality
- Provides more information to base decisions upon
- Increases confidence in decision making in recruitment
- Enhances and mirrors information from other selection stages.
- Explores organisational values and team fit.
- Sets out safeguarding expectations for applicants.

### **2.6.3 Interviews**

At a minimum, the selection process should involve a face-to-face interview and where appropriate another tool (role play, presentation, teaching a lesson, participating in activities with children under observation etc).

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and explore their suitability to work with children and young people. The selection process for people who will work with children and young people should always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate.

At interview, use probing questions into motives, attitudes and behaviours, not just skills and experience, and questions that cover safeguarding issues as well as other role-related areas.



Examples of selection tools that could be used alongside interviews are:

- role plays
- presentations
- group exercises
- written exercises
- aptitude or ability tests
- personality questionnaires
- job trials

## 2.7 Conditional Offer of appointment

### Pre-Appointment Checks:

An offer to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, will be **conditional** upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

- a) **Identity:** importance of verifying the successful applicant's identity by reference to original documents. Candidates invited to interview should be asked to bring with them the necessary documents to verify their identity that will satisfy the requirements of the DBS in respect of the application for a disclosure - current photo ID (originals) and proof of address (originals).
- b) **DBS barred list:** under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 schools have a legal duty to check that any person being appointed to work in regulated activity\* is NOT barred from working with children or young people.
- c) **DBS certificate:** the successful applicant should be asked to complete an application for a DBS certificate at the appropriate level and produce the required supporting documentation straight away. Everybody employed to work in a school is required by law to undertake an enhanced disclosure.
- d) **Qualifications:** the successful applicant should be required to provide **original** certificates or diplomas for all the academic, vocational or professional qualifications, as appropriate e.g. GTC registration, QTS status (unless properly exempted), NPQH.
- e) **Status:** it is a requirement for some posts that the applicant is licensed or registered with a professional body. For example, in order to be employed as a teacher in a maintained school, a person must usually have been awarded qualified teacher status and be registered with the relevant general teaching council.
- f) **Prohibition** All teachers must be checked against the prohibition list and interim prohibition list before commencing in post. Schools can check these lists via the Employer Access Online Service.

- g) **Disqualification under the Childcare Regulations 2009** – the DfE issued new guidance for schools (27/02/15). The Regulations apply to anyone working in childcare a) with under 5s or b) in wrap-around care where there are children under 8. It does **not** apply to office staff or cleaners. Employees should be asked to confirm that they are not disqualified from childcare. They should also be informed that they must declare if they know that someone in their household is disqualified.
- h) **Eligibility to work in the UK:** Verify the employee’s right to work in the UK. Make any further checks considered appropriate, if the candidate has lived or worked outside the UK.
- i) **Health and sickness absence record:** As a result of the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to ask about sickness records in references for most types of employment (including school-based roles).
- j) **Pre-employment medical screening:** to establish that the candidate is fit for employment.

Finally, the appointment should be made conditional on the person satisfactorily completing a probationary period. Exceptions are teachers who have successfully completed their statutory induction period as a newly qualified teacher and who cannot be required to complete a further period of probation.

\*Advice can be sought from the Local Authority’s Schools’ HR Consultancy Team if a DBS Disclosure reveals any criminal offence(s) or information that a candidate has not disclosed during the selection process.

***See Appendix 3 – Decision Form***

All checks will be:

- Documented and retained on the personnel file (subject to certain restrictions on the retention of information imposed by DBS regulations).
- Recorded on the school’s single central register.
- Followed up where checks are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

### **3. Post appointment Induction**

There should be an induction programme for all staff newly appointed to the school, regardless of previous experience. The induction programme which should cover all relevant matters of school policy including safeguarding and promoting the welfare of

children, child protection procedures, whistle blowing and guidance on safe working practices.

## **4. Other Recruitment and Selection Requirements**

### **4.1 Single central record**

Recruitment and selection information for the successful candidate must be retained securely and confidentially for the duration of his/her employment with the school, including:

- Application form - signed by the applicant
- Interview notes - including explanation of any gaps in the employment history
- References - minimum of two
- Proof of identity
- Proof of right to work in the UK
- Proof of relevant academic qualifications
- Evidence of medical clearance from the Occupational Health service
- Evidence of DBS clearance, Barred List (where applicable) and Teacher
- Prohibition checks
- Offer of employment letter and signed contract of employment

The school will maintain a Single Central Record of employment checks in accordance with DfE guidance.

### **4.2 Recruitment of Supply and agency staff**

Where supply staff are employed directly by the school, all relevant checks as for other employed staff must be carried out. This will be recorded on the single central register.

Before taking on a member of supply staff provided by a supply agency, the school should obtain written confirmation from the agency that the appropriate checks have been undertaken by the agency.

In relation to DBS Disclosures, the written notification from the agency must confirm that relevant DBS Disclosures have been requested for that individual, whether the Disclosure has been received, and if received, whether it included any disclosed information. The school should record the confirmation of relevant checks from the supply agency on the single central record.

### **4.3 Volunteers**

We recognise that many parents and other volunteers help regularly in school and in so doing, provide much needed and valuable support.

All volunteers that come into close contact or regular contact with children will be asked to complete a Criminal Records Bureau (DBS) Enhanced Disclosure Form.

The Headteacher will consider the suitability of the person volunteering. Should a volunteer not be known to the school community then the Headteacher will make a risk assessment and will seek references.

Under **no circumstances** should volunteers be allowed to work unsupervised with children until a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure has been obtained.

#### **4.4 Governors**

Members of the Governing Body will be recruited as directed by DfE Guidance and will need to obtain a DBS Enhanced Disclosure.

#### **4.5 Students on placement**

When volunteers are working in school as part of a recognised training course (such as PGCE, NVQ etc.), references and completion of an application form will not be required. However, there must be proof of DBS enhanced clearance with barred list check and identity checks.

#### **4.6 Students on work experience**

Students on work experience must always be supervised.

#### **4.7 Contractors**

Contractors, or any employee of the contractor, working at the school must have been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check, if any such check is required. Contractors and contractors' employees for whom an appropriate DBS check has not been undertaken **must** be supervised if they will have contact with children. The identity of contractors and their staff must be checked on arrival at the school.