



HIGHFIELDS SCHOOL

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY 2016

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The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It is an essential factor in creating a safe environment for children to learn. As a school we demand that everyone working with our children shares our commitment to keeping them safe and promoting their welfare at all times.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the minimum requirements of a recruitment process that will not only attract the best possible applicants to vacancies but also deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people and identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people.

To achieve this we will:

- ensure that key staff who are involved in the recruitment process will have received safe recruitment training and that every appointment panel includes one member of staff who has received safe recruitment training
- implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that steps are taken to deter and identify and reject candidates who are unsuitable to work with children, or who are disqualified from working with children, or do not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role.
- keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DfE requirements (Keeping children safe in education .74 July 2015).
- ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure and monitor their compliance with these measures.
- require our staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the school to notify the school, in writing of the offence and the penalty.

Planning and Advertising

It is essential to plan the recruitment exercise carefully so that safeguards are not skimmed or overlooked. We will make sure at the outset that all the material, e.g. the application form, job description, person specification and information or guidance for applicants that will form part of the candidate information pack, is up to date, and clearly sets out the extent of the relationships and contact with children, and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have in the position to be filled.

When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement will always include a statement about our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced check, where appropriate, as well as the usual details of the post, salary and qualifications required.

Applications

The school uses the standard Wolverhampton Local Authority application form. CVs are not accepted as a replacement for this but may be submitted in addition. The application form requires candidates to provide:

- full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address, and National Insurance number;
- a statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the position for which they are applying with details of the awarding body and date of award;
- a full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, and part-time and voluntary work as well as full-time employment, with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment, education or training, and reasons for leaving employment;
- a declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers (including councillors and governors);
- details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer, and normally two referees should be sufficient. Where an applicant who is not currently working with children has done so in the past it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children.
- a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his or her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification.

The application form also includes an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore that all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as 'spent', must be declared. It also requires a signed statement that the person is not on a barred list, prohibited from teaching, disqualified from working with children, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, and either has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, or has attached details of their record in a sealed envelope marked confidential.

It also states that:

- where appropriate the successful applicant will be required to undertake a DBS Enhanced check;
- the prospective employer will seek references on short-listed candidates, and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview;
- if the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, his or her current employer will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children, including any for which the penalty is time expired (that is where a warning could no longer be taken into account in any new disciplinary hearing for example) and whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns, and if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. If the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues; and
- providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police.

Applicants for teaching posts are also to be asked for their DfE reference number.

Job description / Person specification

These will clearly state the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and will also make clear that a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is an essential part of the role and that these issues will be explored as part of the interview process.

Scrutinising and short-listing

All applications are scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed, that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment. Incomplete applications are not accepted.

Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny are noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short-list the applicant. As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work, also need to be explored and verified.

References

References are only accepted directly from the referee. Testimonials or open references are unacceptable. References are sought on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, and usually are obtained before interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview. In exceptional circumstances it might not be possible to obtain references prior to interview, either because of delay on the part of the referee, or because a candidate objects to their current employer being approached at that stage.

A copy of the job description and person specification for the post for which the person is applying is included with all requests, and every request asks:

- about the referee's relationship with the candidate
- whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question, and for specific comments about the applicant's suitability for the post, and how they have demonstrated that they meet the person specification
- whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and, if not, for specific details of the referee's concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the person might be unsuitable;

Reference requests addressed to a candidate's current or previous employer in work with children should also ask for:

- specific comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct
- details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to in which the disciplinary sanction is current

- details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children or young people, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired, and the outcome of those
- details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people, and the outcome of those concerns

References will be checked to ensure that all key areas have been addressed and also compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant at interview and with the referee before any appointment is made.

Invitation to Interview

The invitation to interview will make it clear that the successful candidate will need to have their identity confirmed and that a DBS Enhanced check will be required. Candidates are instructed to bring documentary evidence of their identity and their educational and professional qualifications to the interview. Copies of these are kept on file for the successful candidate.

Interviews

The selection process will always include a face to face professional interview including a question related to safeguarding children. In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also explore:

- the candidate's attitude toward children and young people;
- his or her ability to support our agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- gaps in the candidate's employment history; and
- concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee.
- if the candidate wishes to declare anything in light of the requirement for an enhanced DBS check.

Pre-Appointment Checks

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken, documented and retained:

- Verification of the candidate's identity
- A barred list 99 check
- A Prohibition from Teaching check
- A Section 128 check (for management positions for independent schools (including free schools and academies))
- A satisfactory Enhanced DBS check
- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- Verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness for the post
- Verification of qualifications and any professional registration
- Verification of the person's right to work in the UK
- Additional checks may be required if the candidate has previously worked with children outside of the

UK; this would include recording checks for those EEA teacher sanctions and restrictions.

The above checks will be followed up where there are discrepancies or concerns in the information provided.

In the following circumstances a report should be made to the Local Authority Safeguarding Designated Officer and / or the police:

- the candidate is found to be on a barred or prohibited list or the Enhanced DBS check shows they have been disqualified from working with children by a Court
- an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application
- there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children

Commencement of Employment

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued. In certain circumstances it is permitted to agree employment prior to receiving a DBS enhanced check as long as the other checks detailed above are all completed BEFORE a person's appointment is confirmed. The DBS check must be obtained as soon as practicable after appointment.

Training on safeguarding, safe practice and promoting the welfare of children forms a fundamental part of the school's Induction procedures for all staff. School staff are given guidance on professional boundaries and safe working practices. The school adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously.

Interview Record Retention

The school will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6 month period, after which time the notes will be shredded. The 6 month retention period will allow the school to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to the Employment tribunal.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a subject access request in writing to the chair of the panel / Headteacher within 6 months of the interview date.

Personnel files

We will retain the following information, which will make up part of the personnel file for the successful candidate:

- Application form
- References
- Disclosure of convictions form
- Proof of identification
- Proof of academic qualifications
- Evidence of medical clearance from Occupational Health (where applicable)

- Evidence of the DBS clearance (ie: the notification form or the DBS certificate reference number, NOT the actual DBS form or certificate)

Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks

In line with DfE requirements, the school will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The central list will record all staff who are employed at the school, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, governors who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g: specialist sports coach or artist.

The SCR will indicate when and who by the following have been completed:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job
- Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom
- Barred list check
- Prohibition from Teaching check
- Enhanced DBS check
- Further overseas records where appropriate

Supply staff / Teacher training placements

It is very rare for the school to use agency supply staff but if necessary we will require written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed the checks described above. The school does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure. However identity checks must be carried out by the school to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them.

It is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks on trainee teachers and provide the school with written confirmation that these checks have been carried out.

Visitors to the School

Visitors to the school sign in and out at Reception and are escorted whilst on the premises by a member of staff. It is not necessary to obtain a DBS Disclosure for:

- visitors who will only have contact with children with a member of staff present
- visitors or contractors who come on site only to carry out emergency repairs or service equipment and who would not be expected to be left unsupervised on school premises
- volunteers or parents who only accompany staff and children on one off outings or trips that do not involve overnight stays, or who only help at specific one off events
- people who are on site before or after school or college hours and when children are not present
- health professionals

Identity checks will need to be made on the above individuals however.

Contractors

Children are not allowed in areas where builders are working, for health and safety reasons, so these workers should have no contact with children. However we will ensure that arrangements are in place with contractors, via the contract, to make sure that any of the contractors' staff that come into contact with children undergo appropriate checks. Carillion FM staff should be considered to be Highfields' staff and the relevant checks and training conducted. Records of those checks should be maintained in their own Single Central Record to which we should have access.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the governing body to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for the 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 Headteacher and others involved in the recruitment process 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
- 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 Headteacher to lead in all appointments outside of the Senior Leadership and Management Team. School governors may be involved in staff appointments, but the final decision will rest with the Headteacher. The Headteacher may delegate the selection process of staff outside of the leadership group to other managers in the school, but remains responsible for the decision to appoint.

It is also the Headteacher's responsibility to carry out all relevant checks if there are any concerns about an existing staff member's suitability to work with children. There is also a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to children.

It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers to comply with this document.

November 2016

Review annually each Autumn term