

Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

This policy is non-contractual and is not incorporated into your contract of employment. It may be amended at any time.

1 Purpose

The safe recruitment of staff into the organisation is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff to share this commitment. In order to achieve our aims and objectives it is fundamental that we attract, recruit and retain staff of the highest calibre who share this commitment.

We recognise the value of, and seek to achieve, a diverse workforce. We are committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the organisation is conducted in a manner that is professional, systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. We are a Disability Confident Leader employer and guarantee any candidate with a disability who meets the minimum requirements of the role, as set out in the job description and person specification, a first interview. Reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability/protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles in our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy and practice and other relevant organisational policies. See appendix 1 for other relevant policies.

The aims of our recruitment and selection policy are to ensure:

- that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability
- that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently
- that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation as outlined in the Equality Act 2010
- compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE September 2022) and the code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and the Academies Financial Handbook 2022
- those involved in the recruitment of staff have received appropriate safer recruitment training in line with KCSIE September 2022 including at least one of the interview panel members to have received safer recruitment training
- that we meet our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out robust recruitment methodology and carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks and to ensure these are recorded on the Single Central Register (SCR)

Scope: this policy and procedure defines “staff” as any person working at the organization whether under a contract of employment, under a contract for services, but does not include supply/agency staff or a volunteer

2. The recruitment and selection process

2a Vacancies and adverts

The skills, abilities, experience, attitudes and behaviours for the post including the safeguarding requirements for the role will be set out in a job and person specification. Only essential requirements will be included.

Vacancies are normally advertised on our careers pages and this is managed via our e-recruitment system, eArcu.

Where appropriate, adverts will also be placed via other sources, e.g. job boards, publications, appropriate networks and in exceptional circumstances recruitment agencies to ensure an adequate pool of potential candidates.

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Whenever we advertise we include reference to our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and make clear the safeguarding checks that will be undertaken.

Applications from staff re-applying for a vacancy (same role with the same pay and grade), within 6 months of an unsuccessful application, where the panel considered them un-appointable, will not usually be reconsidered for the vacancy except in exceptional circumstances, eg there is a clear business need, or the candidate's personal circumstances have changed.

All applicants need to complete an application form online via eArcu which includes all the information outlined in KCSIE 2022. CVs will only be accepted on an exceptional basis for specific agreed office based roles, however all successful candidates will be required to complete the application form as part of the recruitment process.

2b. Shortlisting

Selection methods will be reliable, objective and guard against bias.

All candidates will be vetted throughout the process for their suitability to work in an environment where they will have contact with children and vulnerable adults.

Applications will be assessed by trained members of staff who understand the job and person specification to enable a shortlist to be drawn up. At least two people will normally carry out the shortlisting exercise. Selection is managed online via the applicant tracking system, eArcu. All comments made by Hiring Managers and the recruitment team will be recorded directly onto eArcu allowing for full transparency.

Applications will be scrutinised carefully to highlight gaps, areas not completed, areas of potential concerns, altered or other inconsistencies.

Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to interview where their relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

2bi. Criminal self-disclosure (see ex-offenders policy)

All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults for example if they have a criminal history, if they are included on children's/adults barred list, or if they are prohibited from teaching.

Self-declaration forms must be completed, signed and returned no later than one day prior to interview. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records. If the forms are sent electronically the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the declaration at the point of interview.

Failure to return the form will result in withdrawal of the offer of interview, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If any criminal or other suitability information is disclosed, the recruitment team will liaise with the Head of Settings/ELT to agree a) whether the information is protected and, if not, b) how / when the disclosed information should be discussed with the candidate (e.g. during the interview, in a separate meeting etc).

2bii Online search (new 1 September 2022 KCSIE)

As part of the shortlisting process we will consider carrying out an online search on short listed candidates as part of its due diligence. This may help to identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online, which we may want to explore with the applicant at interview (See separate form and process). This forms part of our wider safeguarding due diligence which aims to prevent and/or deter individuals who may be unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults.

2biii. Employment history and references (see separate reference policy)

We obtain references before interview, where possible, in order to allow any concerns raised to be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview.

We :

- do not accept open references eg to whom it may be concerned

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- do not rely on applicants to obtain their reference
- ensure any references are from the candidates current employer have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority
- obtain verification of the individual's most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed
- secure a reference from the relevant employer for the last time the applicant worked with children/vulnerable adults (if not currently working with children/vulnerable young adults), if the applicant has never worked with children, then the reference from their current employer
- verify any information with the person who provided the reference
- ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source
- contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided
- compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post and,
- ensure any concerns are resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed

In the case of staff who have lived/worked abroad we will take up at least one reference from the employer in the relevant country and the referee will be verified.

For permanent internal employees (who have already gone through proper recruitment checks including two written references) who are applying for other vacancies/promotion opportunities, a reference may be taken up from the current line manager, as part of the recruitment process. For agency staff applying for a permanent role internal references will be accepted but must also include external references in line with our safer recruitment practices.

2c Selection

At least one member of the recruitment panel must be safer recruitment trained. Safer recruitment training and training in best recruitment practice is carried out regularly. Certification for accredited courses regarding safer recruitment training is valid for three years.

We use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post linked to the job and person specification. For some roles, in addition to the standard panel interview, candidates may also be asked to make a presentation, carry out a task, undertake a trial day. If this is the case candidates will be notified in advance.

During the interview the recruitment panel will:

- find out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working in the charity or working with children/vulnerable young adults
- exploring their strengths, skills and competencies asking for examples of experience of working with children and vulnerable young adults which are relevant to the role, emotional resilience, values, and
- probe any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking for the reasons for this.

All candidates interviewed for posts will be asked a mandatory question “*Have you at any time been subject to an interview, inquiry, children's services or social services investigation, suspension from work, disciplinary, police investigation, caution or conviction as a result of concerns about child abuse or neglect or the abuse or neglect of an adult?*” As well as the mandatory question there should also be a safeguarding question that relates to the post / role and tests safeguarding knowledge and understanding.

All information considered in the decision making should be clearly recorded (legible handwriting or typed online) along with decisions made on the interview template form.

All interview notes for successful candidates will be uploaded directly onto the candidate's digital file on SharePoint. Interview notes for unsuccessful candidates will be safely stored for 6 months before securely destroying/deleting them.

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The interview will be conducted in person wherever possible. If circumstances preclude an in person interview, video conferencing will be used or when selection involves more than one stage telephone screening/video screening/first interview stage may be undertaken remotely.

2d Pre-appointment vetting checks, regulated activity

Pre-employment checks are carried out as an essential part of safeguarding our children and vulnerable young adults. These checks are part of our safeguarding regime which continues following appointment. No one can start until all pre-employment vetting checks have been carried out and are signed off by a member of the Senior Management/Leadership team.

All offers of appointment are conditional until satisfactory completion of mandatory pre-employment checks:

- verification of a candidate's identity
- obtaining (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS check including children and adults barred list for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) See appendix 2 for schedule of checks
- verification of the candidates mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- verification of the persons right to work in the UK, including EU nationals
- if the person has live or worked outside the UK, make any further appropriate checks
- verification of professional qualifications as appropriate including for teachers - the Teacher Regulation Agency's (TRA) Employer Access Service is used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS) Health professionals (including, occupational therapists, speech & language therapists, behaviour analysts) will be checked to ensure they are registered with the relevant regulatory body (e.g.), Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) and where required professional members to ensure that no restrictions are placed on their practice
- for all management positions working at/for AaAST (or seconded to AaAST in a management position) a section 128 direction by the Secretary of State must be checked
- check that any applicant employed to carry out teaching work (as defined by The Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 defines teaching as planned and preparing lessons and course for pupils; delivering lessons to pupils; assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils, and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils) is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE before is abolition in March 2012
- ensuring that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals employed to work in reception classes, or in wraparound care for children up to the age of 8 are not disqualified from working in these setting under the 2018 Childcare Disqualifications Regulations
- receipt of two satisfactory references (if these have not already been received)

Currently due to COVID-19 pandemic and following advice from Gov.uk we have amended our practices to allow ID documents to be viewed over video link and a scanned image of the ID document is recorded on the individuals e-file until the employee's first day of employment within a setting, where they must bring in the ID documents to be verified and documented. For more information please visit: (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-right-to-work-checks>). However from 1 October 2022 these adjusted checks will not be permissible and all successful candidates will be required to attend an ID appointment with a member of the people team or another trained member of staff as soon as possible and prior to their start date, following the acceptance of an offer to verify their identity, address, right to work status and if relevant their qualifications. Please note that originals of the above are necessary. Photocopies are not sufficient.

All original DBS certificates must be verified by trained staff. The data, person and DBS number will be recorded on the single central record.

Staff who are appointed on a fixed term contract will only be appointed to a permanent position if the full recruitment, selection and vetting processes have been followed.

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Criminal convictions (see ex-offenders policy and procedure)

Any relevant criminal records disclosed by a candidate or positive DBS checks must be discussed with the Head of Settings/ELT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If a candidate with a disclosed criminal record or a positive DBS is to be offered a post, the offences must be discussed with them and the result of those discussions recorded using the risk assessment form. All completed risk assessments will be submitted to the Designated Safeguarding lead for review. An offer of employment cannot be redacted on the basis of information disclosed on an enhanced DBS without the applicant being given an opportunity to provide further information.

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff. In addition further appropriate checks should be carried out including:

- criminal record checks for overseas applicants as per Home Office guidance
- obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions and/or that they are aware of any reason as to why they may be unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults

Where this information is not available we may will seek alternative methods of checking suitability and/or undertake a risk assessment that supports our informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment

Single central record

We maintain a single central record of pre-employment checks as set out in KCSIE. The single central record covers all staff, agency and third party supply staff (even if they work for one day), Trustees and Governing body members and volunteers.

On going safeguarding

- As part of our ongoing duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and to ensure that staff continue to be suitable to work with vulnerable groups, all staff are required to make an annual declaration of no further convictions, cautions or pending court cases
- All ELT and Designated Safeguarding Leads must be on the update service

Candidate Talent Pools

Candidates who are deemed to be suitable for appointment by the selection panel, but for whom there are not enough vacancies, can if they wish, be added to our Talent Pool. If another vacancy for the same role on the same terms becomes vacant, then the vacancy may be filled directly from the talent pool without the need to re-advertise. Appointment will be subject to the candidate being able to fulfil any specific requirements of the vacancy at the time. The Recruitment team will actively manage and engage with candidates in the talent pool, who will receive termly updates and will be able to apply for any live vacancies. In line with GDPR, applicants within the talent pool will be contacted annually to ascertain if they want their details to remain within the talent pool or removed.

Fraudulent Applications

Providing false information could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected. If an application turns out to be fraudulent this may need to be referred to the police as a criminal act may have been committed ie Obtaining Pecuniary Advantage by Deception. A referral may also be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if it is believed the fraudulent application may indicate that the individual is unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults

Candidate feedback

As part of our commitment to good practice, we offer verbal feedback to all unsuccessful interviewed candidates, where possible, within three weeks from the date of interview. We can offer feedback to unsuccessful applications (those who are unsuccessful in being shortlisted for interview) to internal applicants only.

Complaints procedure

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Any candidate who considers that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against should follow our [complaints procedure](#) within two weeks of a selection decision being made. Complaints received will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and sensitively in line with our procedure.

Retention, security of records and data protection obligations

We will comply with our obligations regarding the retention and security of records in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice and its obligations under our Data Protection Policy. We will comply with our data protection obligations in respect of the processing of criminal records information. More information on this is included in the Privacy Notice and our Data Protection Policy.

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Appendix 1

Other policies to be referred to

Adult at risk safeguarding and protection policy and procedures
Child safeguarding and protection policy and procedures
Complaints procedure
Data protection policy
Equity, diversity and inclusion policy
Induction policy
Staff code of conduct / safe working practice
Whistleblowing policy
References policy
Probation policy
Pay policy
Volunteers policy and procedure
Recruitment of ex-offenders Policy
Please see separate policy and process regarding recruitment of Trustees and Volunteers

Schedule 2

List of checks – insert spreadsheet with level of checks for all staff groups.

Governors and Trustees (see recruitment for Trustees and Governors policy)

All governors and trustees / board members are required to have an enhanced DBS certificate without a barred list check, with the exception of the Chair of Trustees who is vetted by the Secretary of State for Education via Ofsted. S128 checks are required for some governors and / or trustees.

Agency and Contractors

In the case of agency or contract workers, we obtain written confirmation from the agency or company that it has carried out the appropriate checks (identity, enhanced dbS check renewed every 3 years, right to work in the UK, barred list checks if appropriate, prohibition, qualifications, overseas checks, and in line with KCSIE 2 references, declaration of medical fitness, check of previous employment history, online search).

We carry out identity checks on agency and contract workers on arrival in our settings and are provided with a copy of the DBS check. The agency or contract worker are recorded on our single central record. Agency staff will remain on a green lanyard.

Contractors on site will not be left alone in areas where they can be with children or vulnerable adults or have access to data about children or adults at the school or other services. If employed to work with children or vulnerable adults then they will be subject to the same checks as an employee; the contract will make clear the checks that AaA / AaAST expects the contractor to complete.

Volunteers: see volunteer policy and process

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