

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 and Scope

Having the right people in the right place at the right time is crucial to Ambitious about Autism (AaA) and Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust (AaAST) success in meeting its objectives. We are committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection for all positions, whether permanent, temporary, part time or fixed term, is undertaken in a professional and systematic manner with the aim to promote fairness, equality and diversity, good practice and in line with legislation at all stages of the process. We are committed to consistently and constantly utilise and review safer recruitment processes to ensure the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Other policies to be referred to:

Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedure

Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedure

Complaints Procedure

Data Protection Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Induction Policy

Staff code of conduct / safe working practice

Whistleblowing

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

2 Who is involved in the process

Who is Involved	Responsibility
Trustees	Responsibility for the recruitment and selection of ELT members, in line with the Recruitment Policy and Guidelines. Regularly review Single Central Record (SCR)
ELT	Overall responsibility for approving the business need and budget for proposed recruitment. Budgeting and planning for new positions within the team Identification of the Hiring Manager
ELT/Heads of Settings	Discussion with potential candidates where relevant criminal records disclosed or positive DBS checks obtained and results of those discussions recorded Full Risk Assessment put in place and signed off by ELT/Heads of Service and where appropriate escalated to Executive Principal. Regularly review Single Central Record to ensure compliance at all times
Hiring Manager	Carrying out the recruitment process in line with the Recruitment Policy and Guidelines. Subject to agreement with ELT offer employment subject to recruitment checks and within budget, and in line with the AaA and AAaAST Pay Policy.
Recruitment panel	One member of the panel must have completed safer recruitment training within 3 years and all must be appropriately trained and familiar with procedures
HR AaA and AaAST are responsible for issuing own Statement of	Offering advice and guidance on manpower planning, recruitment and selection matters

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Particulars and setting up the personnel record both manually and electronically	Issuing the Statement of Particulars (often referred to as the Contract of employment) once a verbal offer of employment has been made and accepted. A 'written statement of terms' to employees and workers will be made on (or before) their first day of work. Setting up personnel record on HR data base V2
Admin team at AaAST	Carry out all recruitment administration for new employees and manage onboarding checks in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
The Recruitment Team	Review and apply for suitable references via eArcu, and present completed references to Heads of settings/ELT for sign off Follow up any reference that does not address suitability questions or is vague Verify all electronic references are from a legitimate source. Where references are unable to be verified a risk assessment will be presented to the Head of Settings/ELT and Designated Safeguarding lead for review
The Recruitment Team	Populate and maintain the SCR. Head of Recruitment monitors compliance in this monthly
The Recruitment Team	In alignment with safer recruitment principles and Keeping Children Safe in Education part 3, undertake all suitability checks for relevant posts via the Teachers' Services portal & print / retain results Undertake stand-alone DBS barred list checks where necessary Right to work in UK checks Qualifications
The Recruitment Team and Hiring Managers	Undertake written risk assessment for all volunteers not in regulated activity, to determine whether any criminal disclosure certificate is appropriate / lawful

Vacancies

Vacancies will be advertised on the AaA and AaAST websites. For AaA this will be managed via our e-recruitment system, eArcu. Existing employees are to be encouraged to apply for vacant roles via our internal site which is managed by eArcu, if they have the appropriate qualifications, experience and skills.

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. Whenever we advertise externally we will include reference to our commitment to ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and our recruitment process aims to attract suitable candidates who share this aim.

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 be usually be considered. However, where there are exceptional circumstances, e.g. there is a clear business need, or the candidate's personal circumstances have changed, then an application within 6 months may be considered.

Selection

Selection methods will be reliable, objective and guard against bias. Essential requirements for the role will be published in the role profile and person specification, as will the requirements for an enhanced DBS check. All candidates will be vetted throughout the process for their suitability to work in an environment where they will have contact with vulnerable children or young adults. For all senior management, school, college and hybrid roles the selection process will always involve completed application forms. CVs will only be accepted for specific office based roles however, successful candidates will be required to complete the application form. Application forms/CVs will be assessed by relevant members of staff who understand the role against the person specification and role profile to enable a shortlist to be drawn up. For AaA settings, application forms are managed online via the applicant tracking system, eArcu, where shortlisting will also be supported. 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, altered or other inconsistencies. Shortlisted candidates will then be invited to interview.

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Criminal self-disclosure

All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a self-disclosure form to be returned no later than one day prior to 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 People 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 with the people team, etc)

Interviewing

At least one member of the recruitment panel must be safer recruitment trained.

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?”*

The panel should also ask questions to assess the candidates’ personal competencies in relation to their:

- Motivation for working with children or adults who may be vulnerable
- Emotional resilience
- Values and ethics
- Strengths

Questions on the above will have direct links to the person specification for the role and be structured in such a way that examples of what would constitute a positive indicator in a response is set alongside what a negative indicator would be to assist the panel in measuring the responses.

As part of the application and interview process any gaps in employment and short periods of time in a post must be explored with the candidates, remembering that most of the time these are for legitimate reasons.

It is good practice to ask follow up and probing questions. Responses to questions should always be written down in legible handwriting by a panel member on the interview template form. All interview notes for successful candidates will be uploaded directly into the candidate’s digital file on SharePoint, interview notes for unsuccessful candidates will be stored for 6 months before terminating.

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.

For some roles telephone screening/video screening may be undertaken and the panel will always meet face to face with the candidate for at least one stage of the selection process. **In light of COVID-19 we have adjusted our practice to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both employees and applicants; to support this, we are holding interviews via video link. For positions of seniority, Heads of Settings/ELT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a judgement prior to advertising whether a face to face interview with the candidate will be required as part of the selection process, and subsequent risk assessments will be completed.**

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. **In light of COVID-19 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 will be 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>).**

Some roles may require additional assessments (task test, presentation or trial day). If this is the case, details will normally be included in the application pack. Any test used will have been validated in relation to the job and be free of bias. For Senior Management Team roles, personality testing is normally carried out to support the selection process.

Temporary 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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References

References are taken up for every AaA and AaAST appointment, whether permanent, temporary, part time or fixed term. Upon application we require the names and contact details of two referees that can be contacted during the selection process. Additional referee details may be required dependent on the role and employment history. One reference must be obtained from the current or most recent employer. Where the individual is not currently working with children or vulnerable adults but has done so in the past, a reference will always be sought from the last place where the person was employed with those groups. In the case of staff who have lived or worked abroad, we will take up at least one reference from the employer in the relevant country and the referee will be verified by phone. Open references will never be accepted.

For specific roles, we reserve the right to take up at least one reference prior to interview. This includes but is not limited to all senior roles, teaching posts and AHP professionals. This will be agreed prior to advertising and confirmed in the advert for the role. Please refer to the Reference Policy.

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.

Safer Recruitment

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff, volunteers and contractors to share this commitment. The list below details a checklist of our safer recruitment processes that are part of all recruitment within AaA and AaAST. The checklist is not exhaustive and should be added to and adapted to improve the process where appropriate:

1. All advertised vacancies will include a line that highlights our commitment to safeguarding and safer recruitment.
2. Staff involved in recruitment will be briefed on safer recruitment by staff who have received safer recruitment training as part of their pre interview discussions.
3. Selection process requires an appropriate member/s of staff to shortlist which involves scrutinising application forms and highlighting any gaps in employment history or other issues to be addressed at interview.
4. Questions are planned to fit with the person specification / role and cross correlate with the areas detailed in the section on interviews above
5. The mandatory safeguarding interview question must be asked at interview and the response noted and checked against the written answer on the application form
6. For successful candidates, original qualifications and professional registration documents should be inspected by an appropriate member of the panel or trained People Team staff and colour photocopied, signed, and dated as true and fair copies by the administrator.
7. Two references are required, one from the current or most recent employer. If they are not currently employed to work with children or vulnerable adults but have done so in the past, the second reference should be from the last place where the candidate worked with children / vulnerable adults. References that are not sufficient in response should be followed up with a phone call to the referee and the gaps addressed and details of the responses noted. Candidates from abroad should have their references followed up with a phone call to the referee as this provides an additional measure as DBS checks do not cover most offences committed outside of the United Kingdom.
8. All electronic references should be verified to ensure they are from a legitimate source, including but not limited to; verifying business email addresses, checking Companies House / Charity Commission websites, and/or contacting the business / organisation via a mainline phone number to verify the referee is employed by the business and is in a position to provide a reference.
9. Applicants will be provided with information about the changes to criminal history disclosure, and particularly filtered or protected offences, before being asked any questions about their self-disclosure of relevant criminal offences. Recruiting managers, Heads of Services, Recruitment team etc will ensure that they have a sound understanding of which offences may be filtered / protected and therefore should not be disclosed and cannot be taken into account. Recruiters / prospective employers must not discuss protected offences with the candidate.
10. NB Even if a caution, conviction or bind-over is disclosed on an enhanced DBS certificate, it cannot be taken into account if it would be filtered under the new rules.

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11. The candidate must present their original DBS certificate to the People Team within 28 days of the date of issue. The date that the original certificate is seen will be recorded on the SCR. We reserve the right to withdraw the offer of employment if the certificate is not presented within 28 days and no satisfactory explanation is provided by the candidate. Candidates who are registered on the DBS update service must present the original DBS used to register to the update service and provide consent for the recruitment team to undertake an online check.
12. 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.
13. All offers of employment will be conditional on satisfactory enhanced DBS certificate, a relevant barred list check (if the individual is in regulated activity) two or where appropriate more references, proof of right to work in the UK, and health checks. In light of BREXIT and changes to immigration legislation, AaA and AaAST will continue to follow guidance on acceptable right to work checks from the Home Office and Department for Education.
14. For relevant posts, the statutory checks will be taken up via Teachers' Services website:
 - a. Teaching work (Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) / unqualified teachers / Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTAs)) – a check that they are not included on the prohibited list or subject to the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) sanctions
 - b. Anyone that has taught in an European Economic Area (EEA) nation – check that they are not included on the EEA list
 - c. Teachers with QTS will be 'claimed' (and 'disowned' when they leave AaA / AaAST)
15. 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.
16. Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff. This includes obtaining, via the applicant, an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity, even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks should include, where available, criminal records checks for overseas applicants and for teaching positions, obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked. Certificates that are not produced in English will be translated by a AaA/AaAST approved and certified person or service. The individual will remain supervised with a red lanyard until this check has been satisfactorily processed. It should be noted that for individuals who are being sponsored for employment by AaA or AaAST, if a certificate or a satisfactory explanation about why this has not been provided is not put forward, the visa application will be refused.
17. In the first two weeks of employment, the induction must include reading and understanding Keeping children safe in education part 1 & annex A, the Child and Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policies and Procedures, the names and contact details of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Designated Safeguarding Adults Lead (DSAL) and any deputies, Channel General Awareness (PREVENT) training, and completion of the Child and Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Training. These are all mandatory and form part of core induction, as does Safe Working Practice / staff conduct, whistleblowing, GDPR, Health and Safety and the pupil behaviour policy.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

We are committed to applying our equal opportunities policy at all stages of recruitment and selection. Shortlisting will always be carried out in line with Equality and Diversity legislation and AaA and AaAST's Equality and Diversity Policy.

We are signed up to the Disability Confident Scheme and will 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

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stage interview, reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of his/her disability.

We aim at all times to recruit the person who is most suited to the vacant role. Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job.

Offers of Employment

We are regulated activity providers in the children's and adult workforce. This means that all employees will be subject to an Enhanced DBS disclosure. Employees in regulated activity with children or adults will also be checked against the relevant barred list(s). We also require all ELT and Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputies to subscribe to and maintain annual membership of the DBS Update Service from the commencement of employment and for the duration of employment service.

All offers of employment will be subject to eligibility to work in the UK, satisfactory references, qualification checks, medical and fitness assessment, a suitable DBS clearance, including barred list checks if the individual will be in regulated activity. In addition, all teaching posts will be checked for prohibition orders or GTCE sanctions. Health professionals will be checked to ensure they have the appropriate registration (e.g. NMC, HCPC)

The relevant DBS barred list checks **must** be completed before the person commences employment in all cases where the individual will be in regulated activity. This is a legal duty. The date that the barred list check was completed will be recorded on the SCR. If employment in regulated activity with children commences prior to the receipt of an enhanced DBS certificate, the DBS application form must have been submitted to the Disclosure & Barring Service, a written risk assessment will be completed, the individual will be closely supervised at all times and will wear a red lanyard to indicate that checks are not complete. Individuals in regulated activity with adults will not be allowed to commence in post prior to the enhanced DBS certificate being received.

Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) checks

Legislation requires AaA and AaAST to ensure that successful applicants for teaching posts (QTS, unqualified teachers and HLTAs) are not prohibited from teaching by the TRA and that there is no interim prohibition order in place. This check must be completed before the person commences in post and the check recorded on the Single Central Record. Confirmation that the individual is not subject to GTCE sanctions will also be sought. Any management appointment made for AaAST will also be subject to a check of the s128 list (Prohibition from management of an independent school, academy or free schools).

Early years and later years childcare

Posts that provide early years education or childcare to children up to 5 years old or to provide later years childcare (breakfast club, wraparound care, holiday scheme) to children under the age of 8 – or manage that provision - are covered by the Childcare Act 2006 and are disqualified from providing that care in certain circumstances. These include being found to have committed serious offences, having certain orders made against them relating to a child in their care, being included on the DBS barred list or having their registration cancelled in the past. When recruiting to posts to which we believe the Childcare Regulations apply, we will notify the applicant of their duty to disclose any relevant information to the Head of School before they commence in post.

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 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

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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

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. For applicants to AaA services we are committed to ensuring they receive regular updates in regard to their application status and outcome via eArcu.

Complaints Procedure

Any candidate who considers that they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against should contact AaA Director of External Affairs within two weeks of a selection decision being made. Complaints received will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and sensitively, and an outcome given.

Governors and Trustees

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

All agencies supplying agency staff will provide AaA and AaAST with a written agreement that they have carried out reference and DBS checks at the appropriate level on all staff before they supply staff. The agency must confirm the issue date and number of the DBS certificate prior to the person's arrival. All agency staff will on their first day at AaA and AaAST bring with them their right to work documents, photo identification and visa if appropriate. Recruitment and vetting checks, including DBS details, carried out by the agency must be confirmed on a standard form provided by AaA and AaAST and deemed satisfactory by the people team. Where relevant, this will include confirmation that the person is not prohibited from teaching (teaching posts) and/or that the person has been advised of their duty to disclose relevant information in relation to the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations (early years / later years childcare) to the agency. Agency staff will remain on a red lanyard unless they are on the update service and checks undertaken by AaA and AaAST are satisfactory.

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.

Guidelines for managers / individuals

Please see the tool kit for Managers for step by step breakdown of the process with all templates and proformas.

Safeguarding and fob/lanyards system for new staff

AaA and AaAST's safeguarding procedures require that all staff must wear a lanyard and their ID 'fob' at all times. Staff who have had full recruitment checks satisfactorily completed are issued with a black or grey lanyard to carry their ID/fob. The process for gaining the black lanyard is that the People Team notify the hiring manager and settings reception/administration team when all recruitment checks have been completed. The Receptionist/Administrator will issue the individual with a black or grey lanyard. If all checks are not in place by the time a member of staff starts they will have a red lanyard and be supervised at all times until all the checks are complete. **In light of COVID-19 and the introduction of "class bubbles" additional coloured lanyards may be used for staff who have met all recruitment checks, any employee who has not completed all recruitment checks will remain on a red lanyard.**

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Staff and volunteers for whom all recruitment checks have not been completed are required to wear a red lanyard to indicate that these checks have not been completed. This has been intended to safeguard our pupils by minimising the risk of any unauthorised person coming into contact with our pupils.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that staff whose recruitment checks are not yet completed and who are wearing a red lanyard are supervised at all times with pupils.

References/ useful links

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part three: Safe Recruitment):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2>

An Employers Guide to right to work checks:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/946589/An_employers_guide_to_right_to_work_checks.pdf

Covid 19: Changes to DBS ID checking guidelines:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>

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