

# Excel Learning Trust

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## Recruitment and Selection Policy

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## **1. Introduction and Policy Statement**

The Trust recognises that the people who work in its schools and central team are fundamental to the success of the Trust and to ensuring its pupils experience educational excellence every day. It is essential that the Trust attracts and recruits employees with the requisite skills, experience and personal attributes and who are supportive of the achievement of its aims.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that recruitment and selection is conducted in a professional manner, ensuring adherence to statutory and legislative requirements and the promotion of equality of opportunity. This policy has been developed to ensure that recruitment and selection is managed in a framework which promotes best practice whilst also retaining sufficient agility and flexibility.

Advice and support regarding recruitment and selection is available at all times from the Trust's HR Team.

## **2. Scope**

This policy and process applies to all vacancies and appointments to the Trust. It covers:

- Teaching posts
- Support staff posts
- Leadership posts
- Central Services posts
- Permanent posts
- Temporary posts

Whilst this policy does not apply to day to day supply cover, schools must ensure that any supply staff working in the Trust's schools are appropriately vetted and that the supply agency have undertaken all relevant pre-employment checks. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, supply staff must be recorded on the school's Single Central Record, even if they are only working in school for one day.

If a recruitment agency is being utilised in order to fill a vacancy, then they must also adhere to the guiding principles set out in this policy. The recruiting manager should ensure that the relevant agency is provided with a copy of this policy when an agency is first contacted for support in filling any vacancies.

This policy does not apply to volunteers. Please refer to the SBMAT Volunteer Policy in this regard.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

The aims and objectives of this policy are as follows:

- To ensure recruitment of all staff is conducted in a fair, transparent and efficient manner

- To ensure adherence to statutory and legislative requirements and good practice, including safer recruitment and equal opportunities in line with the Equality Act 2010
- To ensure a consistent and equitable approach in recruitment practices across the Trust
- Ensure that safeguarding and the welfare of pupils is prioritised and inherent in all recruitment practice
- To ensure the attraction and recruitment of high quality candidates who will successfully and positively contribute to the work and development of the Trust
- To meet the Trust's operational requirements and strategic aims

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff involved in the recruitment process should be aware of their responsibilities under this policy. In Trust schools, the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring recruitment and selection is conducted in line with this policy. The CEO has overarching responsibility across the Trust, in conjunction with the Director of HR.

All recruitment administration will be undertaken by the Trust HR team, including placing advertisements, collating applications, liaising with the school and candidates regarding the interview and selection process, sending reference requests, sending offer letters to successful candidates, and ensuring all pre-employment checks are received before a candidate's position is confirmed. The Trust HR team will also generate written statements of terms and conditions for employees.

The Business Manager will liaise with the Trust HR team regarding the recruitment process. They are also responsible for ensuring that they have a full personnel file for each employee, and maintaining this file. The Business Manager is also responsible for ensuring that the Single Central Record for their school is accurate and up to date.

#### **5. Safer Recruitment**

Safer recruitment is an integral part of recruitment and selection practices. The Trust will ensure that relevant colleagues involved in recruitment are fully trained in safer recruitment by an accredited trainer from the Safer Recruitment Consortium, and that regular updates to this training are undertaken. There must be at least one person on the recruiting panel who has undertaken safer recruitment training.

The information and requirements set out in this policy adhere to the requirements outlined within Keeping Children Safe in Education.

#### **6. Linked Policies and Documents**

The following policies and documents are linked to and have informed this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- SBMAT Document Retention Schedule

- SBMAT Scheme of Delegation
- The School Staff (England) Regulations 2009
- DfE Staffing and employment: advice for schools
- Equality Act 2010

## **7. Recruitment and Selection Process**

### **7a. General Principles**

All employees involved in the recruitment process, and particularly Chairs of selection panels, should familiarise themselves with the content of this policy and ensure they are aware of their responsibilities with regards to recruitment and selection.

At least one person on the selection panel should have undergone accredited Safer Recruitment training.

If an employee involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application. It would then normally be necessary for the employee to remove themselves from this particular recruitment and selection process, including shortlisting and sitting on an interview panel.

Documentation relating to applicants will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with the requirements of the GDPR and SBMAT policies regarding personal data. Applicants will have the right to feedback and to access any documentation held on them in accordance with the GDPR.

### **7b. Preparation Stage**

Planning the recruitment and selection process is essential to maximise the opportunity for the Trust to attract applicants with the right skills, experience and values and minimise the risk of making unsuitable appointments.

Where possible, the same individuals will be involved throughout the recruitment and selection process i.e. planning, shortlisting and interviewing.

When a vacancy arises, consideration should be given as to whether a direct replacement of the previous post holder is required, or whether there are any amendments to the post needed or whether the duties of the role could be fulfilled in an alternative way. Advice can be sought from the Trust's HR team if required.

Recruiting managers should ensure they have all relevant documentation prepared prior to the vacancy authorisation process, including a job description, person specification and advert. Job descriptions and person specifications are available from the Trust HR team if required. The timeline for the recruitment process should also be carefully planned, to include advertising closing dates, shortlisting and interview dates. Sufficient time should be allocated for each stage, to ensure that candidates receive appropriate

notice of an interview. Advice on suitable timescales can be sought from the Trust HR team.

### **7c. Vacancy Approval**

All vacancies must be approved in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation before they are advertised. Vacancies are currently requested and approved via the Google Form system.

When a request is submitted, all relevant supporting documentation (advert, job description, person specification and any other relevant information) must be submitted to the Trust HR team. Any documentation not received may lead to a delay in advertising.

### **7d. Recruitment Advertising and Sourcing Candidates**

Normally, as a minimum, all vacancies will be advertised internally across the Trust. However, there may be occasions where it is appropriate to ring fence certain vacancies to one school or to particular groups of staff. These occasions include:

- Where positions may provide suitable alternative employment for existing employees whose post has been identified for redundancy
- Where specialist skills, qualifications or experience are required
- Where to advertise a position more widely means that there would be a situation where the school was overstaffed

In these circumstances, advice should be sought from Trust HR prior to advertising a vacancy.

Positions will be advertised using the most appropriate and cost effective medium, in order to maximise the number of suitably qualified candidates. This may include local or national publications and web sites.

Internal advertisements should appear for a minimum of 3 days and external advertisements should appear for a minimum of 3 days. Any variation on this minimum timescale must be discussed with the Trust HR team.

To enable prospective candidates to make informed decisions as to their suitability for vacancies and to maximise the number of suitable applications, all adverts must include the following information as a minimum:

- Job title
- Salary – including pro-rata values if part-time or term-time only
- Hours of work including any part time or term time working arrangements
- Proposed start date
- Whether the post is temporary or permanent
- Summary of the job role and minimum requirements
- How to access and return application forms

- Closing date for applications
- Information regarding the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

All advertisements must also be accompanied by a job description and a person specification for the role.

All applicants for posts advertised externally must complete the Trust's standard application form. CVs will not be accepted as an alternative to the application form and will not be used for short-listing when submitted. The use of a standard application form ensures that a common set of core data is obtained from all applicants.

Internal vacancies may either require applicants to complete a Trust standard application form, or for applicants to submit an expression of interest detailing how they meet the essential criteria for the role as outlined in the person specification.

The Equal Opportunities and Declaration sections of the application form will be removed from all applications as they arrive, so that they are not sent on to the recruiting manager prior to shortlisting. Monitoring of equalities data will be conducted by the Trust HR team at least on an annual basis.

Applications are confidential and should be stored securely, both electronically and in hard copy. Recruitment records must be stored and managed in line with the Trust's Document Retention Schedule.

There may be occasions where insufficient or unsuitable applications are made. On such occasions, consideration may be given to utilising recruitment agencies to source candidates. Recruiting managers should be conscious of the costs involved using such means to source candidates, and ensure that these costs are fully budgeted for in the recruitment process. Further information and support can be obtained from the Business Manager or the Central Finance team regarding budgets.

All applications should be submitted electronically where possible, and will be collated by the Trust HR team. Applications will be sent to the recruiting manager or point of contact at the school for shortlisting.

## **7e. Shortlisting**

Shortlisting must be carried out by at least two people, who should also be part of the interview and selection panel. At least one person should be safer recruitment trained.

Prior to submitting applications to the school for shortlisting, the Trust HR team will conduct a preliminary check for any gaps in a candidate's employment and education history, and these will be questioned with the candidate. However, this does not take away the responsibility of the shortlisting panel to satisfy themselves that any gaps on a candidate's application can be appropriately explained, in line with safer recruitment requirements.

The Chair of the interview panel must be involved in the shortlisting process, and the Chair should be in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

The shortlisting process should be documented and the use of a shortlisting grid is recommended. A template grid can be obtained from the Trust HR team. Shortlisting should be completed against the person specification for the role, with only those applicants who meet the specification invited for interview. Any reasons for not shortlisting a candidate should be clearly recorded.

## **7f. Interview Process**

All invites for interview will be sent centrally by the Trust HR team, to ensure consistency and that all information required is provided to shortlisted candidates. The recruiting manager should provide the following information to the Trust HR team with regards to the interview and selection process:

- Time of arrival
- What the selection process entails (e.g. tasks, teaching, a panel interview) and whether it is a two part process with further shortlisting on the day
- Details of any preparation work required by shortlisted candidates, e.g. details of the lesson they may be required to deliver plus any supplementary information in relation to the class they are teaching, or the topic for a presentation they may be required to prepare
- Who the candidate should ask for upon arrival at the school
- Any particular arrangements with regards to the school, e.g. parking

The Trust HR team will ensure that all candidates are requested to bring to interview the appropriate documentation as outlined below, that they are made aware of the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and child protection and that any offer of employment is subject to pre-employment and safeguarding checks including an enhanced DBS. The Trust HR team will also conduct online checks on shortlisted candidates and will notify the panel of the results of these checks so any issues can be explored with the candidate at interview, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Candidates will also be asked whether they require any reasonable adjustments to allow them to participate fully in the interview process. If any requests for reasonable adjustments are made, advice can be sought regarding these from the Trust HR team.

All interview panels should consist of three people and be comprised and chaired in line with the Scheme of Delegation. Those who have been involved in the shortlisting for the position should comprise the interview panel, apart from in exceptional circumstances (e.g. absence from work).

As standard, all shortlisted candidates will be asked to provide the following documentation as part of the interview process:

- Identification and right to work documentation
- Documentation for a DBS check

- Qualifications
- Criminal record self-declaration
- Childcare disqualification self-declaration (if role requires it)
- Any relevant overseas documentation (e.g. overseas police check)

Where a self-declaration is submitted electronically, the applicant should be asked to physically sign it when they attend for interview

If a shortlisted applicant discloses information which would make it unlawful for the school to employ that individual (for example, they do not have the right to work in the UK), then the offer of interview will be withdrawn.

The Trust will seek to obtain a minimum of two written references and these will be requested for all shortlisted candidates on a standard reference pro forma prior to interview, once the candidate has confirmed their attendance at interview. Referees should be able to comment on the applicant's suitability for the role being recruited to, including their suitability to work with children, and will be from the applicant's current or most recent employer.

The following principles apply with regards to references:

- The Trust will not accept open references or rely on candidates to obtain their references
- Verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment will be obtained if they are not currently employed.
- The information on the application form should be compared and verified with that in the reference and any inconsistencies or concerns will be discussed with the candidate and/or the referee

Prior to the interview the panel members should meet to consider the issues to be explored with each candidate, including any inconsistencies or gaps identified from the application form, the references, the online checks and the self-declaration forms, and who will ask about each of those, and to agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the job description and person specification, including the standard questions that all candidates will be asked, as well as any supplementary questions required based upon candidates' individual applications. Safeguarding and suitability to work with children must be explored with all candidates in interview.

Where it has previously been made clear to candidates and where appropriate for the role, interviews may take the form of a two-part selection process and candidates will only be asked to remain for the second part of the selection process where their performance in the first part warrants this.

Any tasks involved in the selection process (e.g. presentations, in-tray exercises, etc.) must be directly related to the position and be able to be measured against objective criteria. Any presentations should be observed and assessed by the full interview panel.



Pupils should be involved in the recruitment process in a meaningful way, for example by observing short listed candidates teach or through appropriately supervised interaction with pupils.

Appropriate records should be made of the selection process, including notes from the interview and any observations or tasks carried out by the candidates. Templates for this are available from the Trust HR team. This information will be held and managed in line the Trust's GDPR Document Retention Schedule.

Following the interview and selection process, all unsuccessful candidates will be offered feedback on their performance, which will normally be verbal. It is good practice for all panel members to agree on the feedback to be provided to unsuccessful candidates.

### **7g. Making an Offer**

Following the interview and selection process, the panel members should discuss and agree the appointment of the best candidate. There may also be occasions where there are no suitable appointable candidates.

The successful candidate should be contact as soon as possible, and ideally the same day, in order to make a verbal offer. They should be made aware that the offer of employment is subject to satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks as set out in the following section of this policy. All unsuccessful candidates should then be contacted to notify them of the outcome of the interview and selection process, and feedback offered. It is often appropriate to arrange a follow up conversation in order to provide the feedback on their performance at interview. Normally, the Chair of the interview panel would make these telephone calls.

A Notification of Appointment (NOA) form should then be completed and sent to the Trust HR team, who will arrange for a conditional offer of employment letter to be sent to the successful candidate. The NOA form must be signed off in accordance with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

### **7h. Pre-employment Checks**

All appointments are subject to pre-employment checks as follows:

- Evidence of identify and right to work in the UK
- Evidence of any changes of name (where appropriate)
- Enhanced DBS check with children's barred list
- Medical clearance through Occupational Health
- Verification of qualifications (where appropriate)
- Verification of Qualified Teacher Status (where appropriate)
- Two references which are satisfactory to the Trust, to include the current or most recent employer or, if not currently employed working with children, the most

recent employer where this was the case

- For those engaged in providing care for children up to and including reception age or for those who provide wrap around childcare for under 8s, appropriate checks must be carried out to ensure the candidate is not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations
- Checks must also be carried out against the Teacher Regulation Agency barred lists. The Trust's position is that all staff should be checked against the prohibition from teaching and the section 128 lists

There may be occasions where additional references are required. In these instances, the Trust HR team will liaise directly with the successful candidate regarding this. Schools should review all references sent through and ensure that they are satisfied with them. If there are any concerns or issues in relation to references, advice can be sought from the Trust HR team.

Where a candidate has lived and/or worked overseas for a period of 3 months or more within the last 5 years, an overseas criminal records check must also be obtained. An overseas check may also be required where there has been extensive history of living and/or working overseas but over 5 years ago, or where there may be other good reason for a check to be obtained. Advice should be sought from the Trust HR team in these instances.

Information on how overseas criminal record checks can be obtained from different countries is available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants>

If it is not possible for a criminal records check to be obtained from a country where a successful candidate has lived and/or worked, for example due to the country not providing checks, or there is a requirement for the candidate to be present in the country to obtain the check, a robust risk assessment must be carried out prior to the candidate commencing employment and, where a candidate has worked abroad, a reference should be obtained from their place of work.

In addition to an overseas criminal record check, if a candidate has worked as a teacher abroad, then a letter of professional standing (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked should also be requested. If it is not possible to obtain a letter of professional standing, then a risk assessment should be carried out prior to the candidate commencing employment.

Advice on risk assessments is available from the Trust HR team if required.

New employees will not normally commence working until all of their pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed. If there are delays in the receipt of a DBS check or other pre-employment checks, and the school requires the employee to commence work prior to these being returned, advice must be sought from the Director of HR as to whether this can be accommodated or not. A risk assessment must be

carried out and regularly reviewed, and a separate check on the children's barred list completed prior to commencement if this is the case.

All employees, as well as volunteers, governors and supply staff, must be recorded on the Single Central Record as per Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### **7i. Vetting Checks for Internal Candidates**

If an internal candidate is appointed to a new role within their school or elsewhere in the Trust, they will not be required to undergo the full range of vetting checks as the Trust should already have most, if not all, of the checks required on file for them already.

The Trust's position is that one reference should be obtained for internal candidates who are appointed to a new position either within their school or within the Trust.

Additional checks may also be obtained if necessary, for example, obtaining proof of qualifications if these are required.

### **7j. Induction and Probation**

Wherever possible, the successful candidate will be given the opportunity to visit the school prior to taking up their new post, in order to provide an appropriate initial induction session.

As well as the school-based induction process, regular induction sessions will run throughout the academic year with the Trust CEO and relevant senior staff, in order to provide an overview and introduction to the Trust.

An induction checklist should be undertaken with the new employee in order to ensure they are made aware of all the key information required of them in relation to their new role. Mandatory training should also be undertaken by employees upon appointment and regularly throughout their employment; a list of which is available from the Business Manager and which includes safeguarding and child protection. In addition to the mandatory training, the new employee's line manager should arrange for appropriate training and support in relation to their role.

All new employees to the Trust are also subject to a 6 month probation period upon appointment. For further information in relation to this, please refer to the Trust's Probationary Period Policy and Procedure, available in the policies folder on the V:Drive or from the Business Manager.