

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

Date of issue: 01/09/2023

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework within which recruitment and selection decisions will be made.
- 1.2 This policy reflects the requirements set out in the current version of the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'
- 1.3 In addition to safer recruitment, this policy aims to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities throughout recruitment and selection.
- 1.4 The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- 1.5 The Trust aims to deter, reject and identify people who may pose a risk of harm to our students and this policy sets out our recruitment practices which meet that aim.
- 1.6 The recruitment of all job applicants and volunteers to the Trust must, without exception, follow the safer recruitment procedures.

2. General principles

- 2.1 The Two Counties Trust aims to recruit the best person for each post through a fair, transparent, and effective recruitment and selection process.
- 2.2 The Trust will select and appoint the most suitable applicant in terms of experience, competence and (where relevant) qualifications for each role, using a predetermined person specification as the basis on which such decisions will be made.
- 2.3 Shortlisting, interviewing and selection will be carried out without regard to any criteria that are not related to job requirements and all applicants will be considered equally and consistently.
- 2.4 All advertisements will state that the Trust is committed to the safeguarding of all children and young people and will inform potential applicants that an offer of employment will be subject to the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced level DBS disclosure with a children's barred list check, receipt of satisfactory references, and successful completion of all vetting procedures.
- 2.5 Advertisements will also state that it is an offence to apply for a role if barred from engaging in Regulated Activity relevant to children and alert job applicants that an online search will be conducted on shortlisted candidates prior to interview as part of due diligence to identify anything which may bring into question the candidate's suitability to work for the Trust
- 2.6 A social media check will be required as a condition of employment for those offered a post at the Trust.
- 2.7 No job applicant will be treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age or any other potentially discriminatory criteria.

3. People with a disability

- 3.1 The Trust is positive about the employment of people with a disability and is a Disability Confident employer. Candidates with a disability who meet all of the essential criteria within the person specification will be shortlisted and guaranteed an interview.
- 3.2 Where notified, reasonable adjustments to the selection and interview process will be made to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged because of their disability.

4. Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

- 4.1 The Trust uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Disclosures as one of the methods to assess an applicant's suitability for positions. The Trust complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice.
- 4.2 The Trust requires an Enhanced DBS Disclosure with Children's Barred List clearance for any role engaged in Regulated Activity. For roles not engaged in Regulated Activity, a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Disclosure will be required.
- 4.3 A new DBS check will be carried out for new appointments. The Trust does not accept DBS certificates from other employers, regardless of how recently they are dated.



- 4.4 In exceptional circumstances, where there is a delay in the receipt of a DBS Certificate and the employee is required to commence employment it may be possible for the employee to commence work before the DBS check has been received subject to a Risk Assessment signed by the Headteacher / a member of the Trust Executive as appropriate which sets out and confirms:
- A photographic identity check is on file.
 - The employee's current address has been verified.
 - A Teacher Prohibition check has been completed (where required).
 - An overseas check (where required) has been completed and is satisfactory.
 - Right to Work in the UK has been verified.
 - Copies of all qualifications are held on file.
 - Two employment references are satisfactory and on file.
 - There are no unexplained gaps in the employment history.
 - The employee has not declared any charges, convictions, bind-over orders or similar.
 - An enhanced DBS certificate with a Children's Barred List Check has been applied for.
 - Confirmation that the employee will have no unsupervised access to paper or electronic records containing confidential information including safeguarding software and databases.
 - The school has put arrangements in place to ensure the employee is supervised at all times by a member of staff with an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check.
 - A S128 check has been completed (where required).
 - A Children's Disqualification check has been completed (where required)
 - A separate children's barred list search has been completed and is clear.
 - An online search has been completed and is satisfactory.
 - Medical clearance is in hand.
- 4.5 If the successful applicant has lived or worked outside of the UK for 3 months or more in the last 5 years, overseas clearance will also be required as a condition of employment.
- 4.6 DBS certificates are only issued to individuals, who in turn, must provide the original copy of the disclosure to their place of work on their first day of employment (or before). Any applicant or volunteer who fails to produce their original DBS Certificate will not be able to commence work or volunteering and the conditional offer of employment / offer of volunteering will be withdrawn.
- 4.7 Information relating to an individual's criminal record will only be shared with the post holders in the Trust who need to make a decision about the suitability of the individual to work in an education setting with children and young people.

5. Panels

- 5.1 At least one person on any panel must have undertaken safer recruitment training and hold a current safer recruitment training certificate (valid for 3 years).
- 5.2 Panels will normally have 3 members.
- 5.3 The panel will be balanced in respect of gender, age, ethnicity and other protected characteristics, so far as possible.
- 5.4 For the recruitment of a Headteacher a selection panel must consist of at least three members to include the Chair of Governors and the CEO of the Trust.
- 5.5 If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection process.

6. Vacancies

- 6.1 Where a vacancy arises the continued need for the post will be considered, whether the duties are still correct, if the role should be undertaken on a different working pattern and if the post is permanent or required for a fixed term period taking into account developments that are predicated or anticipated in the foreseeable future.



7. Job Profiles

- 7.1 The job profile consists of the job description and person specification and must be finalised before commencing the recruitment process.
- 7.2 All job descriptions will set out clearly the duties and responsibilities of the role.
- 7.3 The job profile sets out that the Trust expects everyone to uphold the commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children. It also sets out that a satisfactory enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with a Children's Barred List Check is required as a condition of employment and that it is an offence to apply for a role if barred from engaging in Regulated Activity relevant to children. Furthermore the job profile states that those engaged in management positions will also require a satisfactory Section 128 check and Nursery posts require a satisfactory childcare disqualification check.
- 7.4 The person specification sets out the qualifications, experience, knowledge and understanding, skills and personal attributes which are required for the role. All person specifications set out that the candidate is required to demonstrate an understanding of safeguarding issues and promoting the welfare of children as an essential requirement.

8. Advertising

- 8.1 All advertisement state:

It is an offence to apply for this role if you are barred from engaging in Regulated Activity relevant to children.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. An offer of employment will be subject to the receipt of a satisfactory enhanced level DBS disclosure with a children's barred list check, two satisfactory references and successful completion of vetting procedures.

In accordance with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), an online search will be conducted as part of due diligence on shortlisted candidates and a social media check will be required as a condition of employment.

We are committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce and candidates with a disability who meet the essential job criteria will be given an opportunity to demonstrate their abilities at interview.

- 8.2 All career pages contain a link to the safeguarding and child protection policy and the policy on the employment of ex-offenders.
- 8.3 A vacancy will normally be advertised internally and externally unless it has been earmarked for redeployment purposes, however we may advertise vacancies internally first where roles may offer career development opportunities for existing employees.
- 8.4 A vacancy need not be advertised if it is suitable for an existing employee who has become disabled and is no longer capable of carrying out their current post.
- 8.5 Candidates will be able to access an up-to-date job profile (role description and person specification) for advertised roles.
- 8.6 It is not necessary to re-advertise a vacancy where a suitable appointment can be made from candidates who have applied for an identical vacancy through the formal recruitment process in the previous 3 months.

9. Applications

- 9.1 In accordance with safer recruitment practice, full applications are almost always required in the prescribed format for all roles, i.e via TES or a Word-based application form containing the information required as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Exceptions will only be made in the case of internal only advertisements which may request existing, fully cleared staff, to provide a supporting statement by way of application or where a reasonable adjustment is required to the method of application for an applicant with a disability.
- 9.2 Curriculum Vitae (CV), applications will not be considered and all candidates will be required to complete a full application.
- 9.3 Applications received after the closing date will not normally be accepted, however if an appointment is not made the application can be considered once the initial selection phase has concluded. However, if



the late receipt is as a result of an internal administrative error the application may be taken forward to shortlisting where possible.

- 9.4 It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position within the Trust. This information is set out very clearly to applicants in the job profile and on careers sites.
- 9.5 All applicants are made aware that providing false information on the application for employment may be an offence and would result in summary dismissal and referral to the police, TRA and or DBS.
- 9.6 Shortlisting will only take place to select those to progress to interview based on the information contained within the application form.

10. Shortlisting

- 10.1 Shortlisting will be carried out by a panel who will aim to shortlist all applications within 5 working days of the closing date. A shortlisting template must be completed in every case.
- 10.2 Shortlisting will be based on the requirements of the role as defined within the person specification and will include assessing candidates against the criteria which can be measured at the application stage.
- 10.3 The panel may weight the criteria in advance of shortlisting to assist the process.
- 10.4 Candidates who meet the highest number of essential criteria, followed by desirable criteria where there is no discernible cut-off from the essential criteria, will be invited to interview.
- 10.5 The panel will complete a shortlisting matrix and agree the candidates who will be invited to interview by agreeing their scoring jointly as a panel. Typically, no more than 6 candidates will be invited to attend interview on any one day.
- 10.6 Shortlisted candidates are required to complete and sign as accurate, a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Any content of the declaration will be discussed and considered at interview.

11. Obtaining references

- 11.1 All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are deemed to be satisfactory by the Trust. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. Where the candidate is not currently working with children but has in the past, a satisfactory reference must be obtained from the last time the applicant worked with children.
- 11.3 References for shortlisted candidates will normally be obtained prior to interview unless a candidate does not give their permission for their referees to be contacted at this stage, or if requests to provide a reference have not been responded to in good time.
- 11.3 When references are taken up after a conditional offer of appointment has been made, the HR Manager will ensure that the references are obtained, scrutinised and any concerns are resolved and that confirmation that the references are satisfactory is obtained from the Headteacher, or in their absence a member of the Trust Executive Team, before an offer of employment is confirmed.
- 11.4 The Trust's template reference request form will be provided to referees together with a copy of the job profile.
- 11.5 The referee must not be a relative and the Trust does not accept open "to whom it may concern" references or testimonials
- 11.6 References obtained prior to interview will be provided to the Panel Chair in advance of the interview. Their responsibility is to scrutinise the reference and seek clarification at interview where necessary. Any issues will normally be taken up with the candidate at interview or if this is not practicable as soon thereafter as possible.
- 11.7 Information received about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of each individual case.
- 11.9 References will always be sought by HR and obtained directly from the referee. Where the employee is employed in education, the Headteacher will always be approached to approve the reference.
- 11.10 All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied, whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children, the candidate's reason for leaving, details of capability proceedings, live disciplinary penalties, and whether



the candidate has been the subject of allegations or disciplinary action relating to the safety and welfare of young people including any warnings that have expired, other than those where were found to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious. These questions are asked alongside an assessment of the candidate's skills, abilities and performance.

- 11.11 In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, information about sickness absence will not be requested prior to interview.

12. Convictions

- 12.1 There are certain convictions which would render a candidate unsuitable for work in a school.
- 12.2 A disclosure may not automatically render the candidate as unsuitable to work in a school, the normal recruitment process will be followed including obtaining a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Certificate with a Children's Barred List check and, if relevant, completion of a subsequent risk assessment.
- 12.3 Candidates will be asked to confirm that they are not included in any list of people barred from working with children by the DBS, the TRA (Teaching Regulation Agency) or any other organisations. It is a criminal offence to apply for a post in a school if included on such a list.

13. Invitation to interview

- 13.1 Interview dates will normally be specified in the advertisement enabling candidates to reserve this date, should they be shortlisted.
- 13.2 Candidates should be invited to interview as quickly as possible after the closing date so that good candidates do not secure employment elsewhere. When invited for interview all aspects of the assessment process will be made clear to candidates in order to give them time to prepare.

14. Selection

- 14.1 Candidates will be assessed by the most suitable method(s) for the position for which they have applied including interview and other activities for example a presentation, observation of teaching practice, additional interview panels, in-tray exercise and so on.
- 14.2 The purpose of selection is to assess the merits of each applicant against the job profile in order to establish their suitability for the role and to work with children and young people.
- 14.3 Before the interview day, the panel must prepare their questions for the role, including safeguarding panel questions, identify areas for further questioning e.g. gaps in the candidates employment history on the application or if the candidate has declared a criminal record and the outcome of the social media check.
- 14.4 All candidates will be asked the same questions and provided with the same opportunity to demonstrate their experience and competence. Panel members may ask follow up questions as required following the candidate's response.
- 14.5 All candidates will be asked safeguarding questions as part of the safeguarding panel interview to further ascertain their suitability to work with children.
- 14.6 Notes of the responses to questions will be made on the interview templates and all candidates will be scored collectively by the panel with scores recorded on the interview templates.
- 14.7 The purpose of the scoring mechanism is to ensure that all candidates are assessed objectively against the degree to which they meet the criteria for the job.
- 14.8 If panels cannot distinguish between candidates, it may be appropriate to hold a second interview; however this should only be considered if there is more information to be found and it should not cover the same ground as the first interview.

15. Conditional offers and pre-employment checks

- 15.1 Offers of appointment are always made as conditional offers until all pre-employment checks are satisfactorily completed.
- 15.2 A conditional offer of employment is subject to written receipt of the following (unless they are already in hand)
- At least two written employment references, one of which must normally be from the current or most recent employer, and which The Trust deems to be satisfactory.



- Verification of the applicant's identity and proof of address.
 - Verification of the applicant's medical fitness in relation to the role.
 - Verification of the qualifications referred to in the application for employment and which are required for the role.
 - Verification of professional status where applicable, for example a teaching qualification and satisfactory completion of statutory induction for teachers.
 - Verification for teachers, and other employees who hold QTS but who are not employed in a teaching role, that they are not subject to a prohibition order.
 - A satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service with a Children's Barred List check.
 - An overseas check where required e.g. a certificate of good conduct.
 - Proof of right to work in the UK.
 - A satisfactory social media check, which establishes there is no activity which would render the candidate unsuitable to be employed by the Trust
 - For management staff, verification that they are not subject to a S128 declaration.
 - For those who work in the Nursery, confirmation that the candidate is not disqualified under the Childcare Disqualification Regulations.
- 15.3 A checklist is maintained to ensure all clearances are in hand prior to a conditional offer of employment being signed off and a contract of employment issued. This checklist is managed by the HR Manager and only signed off as complete once all of the clearances are in hand and are fully satisfactory.
- 15.4 Where clearances are not satisfactory, the conditional offer of employment will be rescinded.
- 15.5 The Trust will maintain a Single Central Register confirming the checks undertaken as part of safer recruitment practices. The data on the Single Central Register is checked by the HR Manager as part of pre-employment procedures and checked again as part of Study Tours twice a year to ensure it remains accurate.

16. Unsuccessful candidates

- 16.1 Unsuccessful candidates will be notified of the outcome of the selection process and feedback will be offered by a suitable panel member.
- 16.1 In the event that the first candidate does not accept the offer of employment, any decision to offer the post to the second candidate will be taken by the panel.

17. Equality and Diversity monitoring

- 17.1 The Trust will monitor all applications and appointments against the protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act.
- 17.2 Panel members will not have access to this information which will be separated from the application prior to interview as it forms no part of the selection decision.
- 17.3 Panel members will however be informed if any candidates have a disability in order to support the Trust's commitment to the Disability Confident scheme.

18. Complaints and appeals

- 18.1 Any applicant who considers that they have been unfairly treated at any stage of the recruitment and selection process should make a written complaint to Human Resources at the Trust within 3 weeks of the advertisement closing or interview date. The complaint will then be investigated, and a response provided.

19. Record keeping

- 19.1 Copies of all recruitment documentation in relation to unsuccessful candidates will be retained for six months after the interview date and then disposed of securely.



20. Declaration of interests

- 20.1 It is the responsibility of any employee involved in the selection process to declare an interest in a candidate as soon as they become aware of it. Interests include personal and professional connections to applicants.

21. General Data Protection Regulation

- 21.1 All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.

