



**Underley Garden**

# Safer Recruitment Policy

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## Document History

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The School, which is part of the Acorn Care and Education Group (Acorn), is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The School recognises the vulnerability of the children and young people in its care and is committed to operating to the highest standards when recruiting employees. The School accepts that it is vital to adopt recruitment and selection procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them. Whilst this policy does cover other areas the protection of children is at its heart.
- 1.2 The School is committed to following the statutory guidance in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007), and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016)
- 1.3 The School operates a non-discriminatory, fair and objective recruitment and selection process. In line with the School's Equal Opportunities Policy, internal and external applicants will receive equal treatment and access to opportunities, irrespective of sex, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, membership or non-membership of a Trade Union.
- 1.4 In the event of an application being received from an employee of a School within the Acorn Group, the candidate will be informed that they must notify their current line management, prior to their application being processed. The School receiving the application will then be in a position to contact the applicant's current employer as with any other applicant.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all internal and external applicants for advertised posts and promotions. Its principles should also be applied when considering permitting volunteers and contractors on site.

## **3. Elements of Safer Practice**

- 3.1 The School recognises that safer practice in recruitment requires considering and including issues to do with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the process. This starts with the process of planning the recruitment exercise, and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants.
- 3.2 The School accepts that it is good practice to ensure, at the outset, that all recruitment materials (e.g. the application form, job description, person specification and information/guidance for applicants), which form part of the pack to be sent to prospective applicants, is up-to-date and clearly sets out the extent of the relationships/contact with children and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have in the position to be filled.

- 3.3 Candidates will receive an information pack which should include a copy of:
- The application form
  - The job description, and person specification
  - Any relevant information about the School and the recruitment process
  - Statements of relevant policies including the Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Statements
  - The terms and conditions relating to the post
- 3.4 When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement will include a statement about the School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced criminal record with Barred List check via the DBS, where appropriate, as well as the usual details of the post and salary, qualifications required, etc.
- 3.5 An application form should be used in order to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants. It is not good practice to accept curriculum vitae drawn up by applicants in place of an application form, because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details.
- 3.6 The Job Description should clearly state:
- The main duties and responsibilities of the post
  - The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons he/she is responsible for, or comes into contact with.
- 3.7 Person Specification should include:
- The qualifications and experience, and any other requirements, needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people
  - The competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate, and
  - An explanation of how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process.
- 3.8 Shortlisting for job candidates will be carried out on a fair and equitable basis against the job criteria and person specification for the post. All applications should be scrutinised to ensure:
- That they are fully and properly completed
  - That the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies
  - That any gaps in employment are identified.
- 3.9 Incomplete applications should not be accepted and should be returned for completion. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified

should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant.

- 3.10 The School commits to attempting to obtain independent professional and character references that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and follow up any concerns. The organisation accepts that other organisations may only be prepared to provide minimum information.
- 3.11 The process will involve at least one face to face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as his/her suitability for the post.
- 3.12 In addition to the candidates' ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including:
- The motivation to work with children and young people
  - The ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people
  - The emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours, and
  - The attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.
- 3.13 As part of the process the School commits to:
- Verifying the successful applicant's identity
  - Verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed
  - Verifying have the right to work in the UK
  - Checking his/her previous employment history and experience
  - Certifying that he/she has the health and physical capacity for the job
  - The mandatory enhanced criminal record check via the DBS
  - The checklist provides a record for signing off each stage of the process and can be filed as a permanent record at the end of the process.
- 3.14 The School will adhere to its mandatory responsibility to secure enhanced DBS disclosures on all new applicants for work and for those applicants who have lived or worked abroad to seek additional information about an applicant's conduct. DBS checks will be reviewed every five years or through the update service.
- 3.15 The School will keep a single central record collating when checks on staff were made and by whom, including identity, qualification requirements, Prohibition and Enhanced DBS checks.
- 3.16 For all our schools, no employee can commence without first having received an enhanced DBS check.
- 3.17 The School undertakes to complete Section 128 of the 2008 Education Act checks on all Governors.

- 3.18 The School commits to request full details of DBS checks carried out on staff supplied through an agency.

## **4. General Recruitment Principles**

- 4.1 Recruiting the right person to a post is crucial. Where this does not occur, it can quickly lead to the discontent of the employee, and may, in turn lead to lowering the morale of a team or department, and, of course, increased labour turnover and recruitment costs should the post have to be re-advertised.
- 4.2 All candidates should be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.
- 4.3 Ensuring fairness and objectivity during the recruitment and selection process is essential. Successful candidates will be appointed on merit against the job based on the job description and person specification. Standardised recruitment processes will be used.
- 4.4 The interview panel should consist of at least one member who has safer recruitment training.
- 4.5 Standardised questions should be prepared for the vacant post and all candidates asked the same interview questions with additional probing questions as appropriate.
- 4.6 Standardised interview record sheets should be completed for all candidates during the interview.
- 4.7 At least two interviewers should interview each candidate (e.g. line manager and one other).
- 4.8 In order to assist with the monitoring of the School's Equal Opportunities Policy and its recruitment and selection processes, all candidates will be asked to complete a confidential Equal Opportunities Monitoring form.
- 4.9 The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.
- 4.10 Ideally, references should be sought on all short listed candidates, including internal ones, and should be obtained before interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.
- 4.11 Candidates should also be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body. N.B. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body. A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file.

- 4.12 Unsuccessful external candidates will be informed in writing with constructive feedback to be given where deemed appropriate and/or requested.
- 4.13 Unsuccessful internal candidates will be invited to a meeting to receive constructive detailed feedback.

## 5. The Appointment

- 5.1 All verbal offers of appointment are to be made "subject to references satisfactory to the School" and "medical clearance".
- 5.2 An offer of appointment to the successful candidate should be conditional upon:
- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one being a professional reference from the last employer (if those have not already been received, all references must be verified detailing name of person who it was verified with, name of verifier, date and time of verification)
  - Verification of the candidate's identity (if that could not be verified straight after the interview)
  - A satisfactory enhanced DBS Disclosure
  - Satisfactory prohibition check
  - Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
  - Verification of qualifications (if not verified after the interview)
  - Verification of professional status where required
  - Satisfactory completion of the probationary period.
- 5.3 All checks should be:
- Confirmed in writing
  - Documented and retained on the personnel file (subject to certain restrictions on the retention of information imposed by DBS regulations), and
  - Followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.
- 5.4 DBS checks should be completed on staff from overseas unless it is verified that the applicant has not previously lived in the UK. If that is the case, the checks will serve no purpose because the individual will not have a criminal record in this country.
- 5.5 In all cases where an applicant has worked or been resident overseas in the previous 5 years, the School will where possible obtain a check of the applicant's criminal record from the relevant authority in that country. Not all countries provide that service. In cases where a criminal record check is not possible, particular care should be taken with the other required checks, especially those of identity and qualifications, and to obtain satisfactory references. Further information can be obtained on the DBS website or by telephoning DBS enquiry line 08709090811.

5.6 All successful candidates will receive written offers of employment.

## 6. Induction

6.1 There should be an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed in an establishment, including teaching staff, regardless of previous experience. The purpose of induction is to:

- Provide training and information about the establishment's policies and procedures
- Support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged
- Confirm the conduct expected of staff within the School
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities, and
- Enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

6.2 The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction programme should include information about, and written statements of:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection/safeguarding procedures
- Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils in the establishment
- How and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised, and
- Other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistle-blowing.

The programme should also include attendance at child protection training appropriate to the person's role.