

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

This policy was agreed by the SRET Board on: (and supersedes all previous policies relating to this area)		To be ratified on 22 March 2023
Signed by:..... (Chair of the SRET Board)		
Implemented:	22 March 2023	
Review date:	01/09/2023	
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INTRODUCTION

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. SRET is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Safer Recruitment policy is to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff.

The aims of the Trust's recruitment policy are as follows:

- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position.
- To ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently.
- To ensure that no job applicant is 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;
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2022).
- To ensure that each school meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

The Trust has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the job description and person specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2022). 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 decision-making process.

The school aims to operate this procedure consistently and thoroughly while obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants applying for job vacancies at SRET.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the governing body to:

- Ensure the school has effective policies and procedures in place for recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
- Monitor the school's compliance with them.

It is the responsibility of the Executive Principal, Heads of School, HR and other Managers involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the schools within the Trust operate safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at each of the schools.
- To monitor agencies compliance with this document.
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure.

The governing body has delegated responsibility to the Executive Principal (teaching staff) and SRET BM (support staff) to lead in all appointments. School governors may be involved in staff appointments but the final decision will rest with the Executive Principal.

Definition of Regulated Activity and Frequency Any position undertaken at, or on behalf of the school will amount to 'regulated activity' if it is carried out:

- Frequently, meaning once a week or more; or
- Overnight, meaning between 2.00 am and 6.00 am; or
- Satisfies the 'period condition', meaning four times or more in a 30-day period; and
- Provides the opportunity for contact with children.

Roles which are carried out on an unpaid/voluntary basis will only amount to regulated activity if, in addition to the above, they are carried out on an unsupervised basis. The school is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in 'regulated activity'. The school is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the school can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible, normally this entails an external advertisement. In some circumstances the vacancy may only be advertised internally. Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection Act (DPA18).

Application Forms

SRET uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role (in addition all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history).

CVs will not be accepted.

It is unlawful for the schools to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to apply for a position at the school. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and referral to the police and/or the DBS.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description is a key document in the recruitment process, and must be finalised prior to taking any other steps in the process. It will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The person specification is of equal importance and informs the selection decision. It details the skills, experience, abilities and expertise that are required to do the job.

References

References for teachers who have been shortlisted will be sent for immediately after shortlisting. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the school. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current/most recent employment does/did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children. The referee should not be a relative. References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children.

Please note that no questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up. Direct contact by phone will be undertaken with each referee to verify the reference if required.

The school does not accept open references, testimonials or references from relatives.

All shortlisted applicants will be required to complete a self-declaration form prior to interview in which they will be asked to provide information about their criminal records history and other factors relevant to their suitability to work with children. This information will be considered and discussed with applicants at interview. Where the applicant electronically signs the declaration, they should physically sign a hard copy at the point of interview

We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates (in line with KCSIE 2022) to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online. Checks will be recorded within the interview schedule where they have been carried out and any concerns to be raised individually with the candidate at interview.

Interviews

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position. The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the job description and meet the person specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps which have been identified in order to satisfy themselves

that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria (in line with Safer Recruitment Training).

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has been disclosed on the pre-DBS declaration form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training or refresher training as applicable.

All applicants who are invited to an interview will be required to bring evidence of their identity, address and qualifications. Original documents will only be accepted.

OFFER OF APPOINTMENT AND NEW EMPLOYEE PROCESS

The Trust through the HR Department carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees.

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- The agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the Trust's standard terms and conditions of employment.
- Verification of the applicant's identity (if not previously been verified).
- The receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the school considers to be satisfactory.
- For positions which involve 'teaching work':
 - i. The school being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of a sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by the Teaching Regulation Agency (formerly National College for Teaching and Leadership), or any predecessor or successor body, or by a regulator of the teaching profession in any other European Economic Area country which prevents the applicant working at the school or which, in the school's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the school; and
 - ii. The school being satisfied that the applicant is not, and has never been, the subject of any proceedings before a professional conduct panel or equivalent body in the UK or any other country for any reason which prevents the applicant working at the school or which, in the school's opinion, renders the applicant unsuitable to work at the school.
- Where the position amounts to 'regulated activity' the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the School considers to be satisfactory.
- Where the position amounts to 'regulated activity' confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from providing education at a school, in the or working in a position which involves regular contact with children.
- Confirmation that the applicant is not subject to a direction under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 which prohibits, disqualifies or restricts them from being involved in the management of a school (if a requirement of their role).
- Verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role.
- Verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK.
- Any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK.
- Verification of professional qualifications which the school deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application (where not previously verified).

Whether a position amounts to 'regulated activity' must therefore be considered by the school in order to decide which checks are appropriate. It is however likely that in nearly all cases the school will be able to carry out an enhanced DBS check and a Children's Barred List check.

A personal file checklist will be used to track and audit paperwork obtained in accordance with Safer Recruitment Training. The checklist will be retained on personal files.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working with, or having access to pupils. Therefore, any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'SPENT' **must be** declared when applying for any position at a school within the Trust.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check

The Trust via the HR Department applies for an enhanced disclosure from the DBS and a check of the Children's Barred List (now known as an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity) in respect of all positions at the school which amount to 'regulated activity' as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended). The purpose of carrying out an Enhanced Check for Regulated Activity is to identify whether an applicant is barred from working with children by inclusion on the Children's Barred List and to obtain other relevant suitability information.

It is the Trust's policy that the DBS disclosure **must be** obtained before the commencement of employment of **any** new employee.

1 The school is not permitted to check the Children's Barred List unless an individual will be engaging in "regulated activity". The school is required to carry out an enhanced DBS check for all staff, supply staff and governors who will be engaging in regulated activity. However, the school can also carry out an enhanced DBS check on a person who would be carrying out regulated activity but for the fact that they do not carry out their duties frequently enough i.e. roles which would amount to regulated activity if carried out more frequently.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

Portability of DBS Certificate Checks

Staff may wish to join the DBS Update Service if they are likely to require another check in the future. Applicants may sign up to the Service for a fee of £14 per annum, which is payable by the applicant.

This allows for portability of a Certificate across employers. The school will:

- Obtain consent from the applicant to carry out an update search.
- Confirm the Certificate matches the individual's identity.
- Examine the original certificate to ensure that it is for the appropriate workforce and level of check, ie enhanced certificate/enhanced including barred list information.

The Update check would identify and advise whether there has been any change to the information recorded, since the initial Certificate was issued. Applicants will be able to see a full list of those organisations that have carried out a status check on their account.

DBS Certificate

The DBS no longer issue Disclosure Certificates to employers, therefore employees/applicants should bring their original Certificate to the Human Resources Department (DBS certificates must be made available prior to, or on first day of employment).

Dealing with convictions

The Trust operates a formal procedure if a DBS Certificate is returned with details of convictions.

Consideration will be given to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and also:

- The nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence.
- How long ago the offence occurred.
- One-off or history of offences.
- Changes in circumstances.
- Decriminalisation and remorse.

A formal meeting will take place face-to-face to establish the facts with Human Resources. A decision will be made following this meeting. In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, Human Resources will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed in liaison with the Executive Principal. If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS.

Secretary of State Prohibition Orders (Teaching & Management roles)

In all cases where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind, a Prohibition Order check will be made using the Teacher Services. It is anticipated that this will be performed at offer stage. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in such a setting. Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by the Teaching Regulation Agency. Pending such consideration, the Secretary of State may issue an interim prohibition order if it is considered to be in the public interest to do so.

A section 128 direction 39 prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an independent school. A person who is prohibited is unable to participate in any management of an Academy school, a governor on any governing body in an Academy school, or a management position that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities. A check for a section 128 direction will be carried out using the Teacher Services' system. Where the person will be engaging in regulated activity, a DBS barred list check will also identify any section 128 direction.

Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS identity checking guidelines. The school does not discriminate on the grounds of age.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (eg marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change. In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification legally required for the position and claimed in their application form.

Medical Fitness

The Trust is legally required to verify the medical fitness of anyone to be appointed to a post at the School, **after** an offer of employment has been made but **before** the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a medical questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against the Job

Description and the Person Specification for the particular role, together with details of any other physical or mental requirements of the role.

The Trust is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

Overseas checks

Applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months will need to obtain a criminal record check or obtain a letter of good conduct.

Induction Programme

All new employees will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including the Child Protection Policy, the Code of Conduct, and KCSIE 2022, and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Single Centralised Register (SCR)

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is held on a SCR. This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Human Resources Department and at Wyndham Park & St Mark's CofE Junior School by the School Business Managers.

The Single Centralised Register will contain details of the following:-

- All employees who are employed to work at the school.
- All employees who are employed as supply staff to the school whether employed directly or through an agency.
- All others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers, governors, peripatetic staff and people brought into the school to provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, eg sports coaches etc.

Record Retention/Data Protection

The Trust is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the School will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the School to discharge its obligations as an employer in order to consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

This documentation will be retained by the Trust for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the School. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Human Resources Office in a locked and secure cabinet.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with School activities.

SRET will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (ie shredded). The 6-month retention period is in accordance with the GDPR and DPA18.

Ongoing Employment

The Trust recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will

therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the Annual Review/appraisal procedure.

Leaving Employment at Somerset Road Education Trust

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely, there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed. Whilst these are pre-employment checks the School also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual:

- Has applied for a position at one of the schools despite being barred from working with children.
- Has been removed by the Trust from one of the schools from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the Trust may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Agency staff

Agencies who supply staff to the school must also complete the pre-employment checks which the school would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the school requires confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the school.

The school will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by an agency.

Volunteers (including Governors/Trustees)

The school will request that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with the school for three consecutive months or more. Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the school on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the school to obtain up to date criminal records of information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

SRET will follow the same recruitment process for volunteers as it does for staff.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Pastoral Lead in conjunction with HR will be responsible for ensuring that this policy is monitored and evaluated throughout the Trust. This will be undertaken through formal audits of job vacancies and internal scrutiny audits. It will be updated in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and other relevant legal requirements.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

NEW EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

NAME _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

JOB TITLE _____

NATIONAL INSURANCE NO. _____

START DATE _____

PAYROLL NO. _____

ACTION		DATE	ACTION	DATE
Google News Search carried out pre-interview	Completed		Pre-DBS Form completed for interview	
Letter of Appointment – preferred candidate	Sent out		Acceptance Received	
Medical Questionnaire	Sent out		Medical Clearance Received	
DBS Form	Sent out		DBS Form completed	
D of D Form & BP Form	Sent out		D of D & BP Forms signed	
SR Reference 1 -	Sent out		Received and confirmed	
SR Reference 2 -	Sent out		Received and confirmed	
SR/CH Reference 3 -	Sent out		Received and confirmed	
SR/CH Reference 4 -	Sent out		Received and confirmed	
Qualifications applicable			Prohibition from Teaching Check	
DBS online application to WC / remote request	Sent		DBS Onscreen confirmation seen	
Document 1	Seen		DBS No	
Document 2	Seen		Certificate Issue Date	
Document 3	Seen		Date certificate evidenced	
Other	Seen			
Employment status confirmed & copied	Seen		Teachers Registration Number (QTS)	
Document	
Letter of Appointment (starter form, HMRC form, contract, JD & PS)	Sent out		Received Starter and HMRC Forms	
			Received Signed Contract	
(DBS) Risk Assessment completed if required			HR Payroll starter Form sent	
Child Barred List checked if required			HMRC Form sent to payroll	
Candidate file checked – initial and date			Candidate added to ARBOR	
Details added to SCR				
Any additional actions/notes:				