



# Safer Recruitment Policy

Our vision is to enable all to flourish.

Status and review cycle;	Non – statutory and every year
Responsible group:	The Trust
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## 1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 The Trust is an organisation with a Christian foundation. The vision, values and ethos of the Trust, and its associated schools, are central to all aspects of the Trust's work. The Trust recognises that its employees are its single most important resource and are fundamental to the success of each school. Our aim is to adopt a thorough, rigorous and professional approach to the recruitment processes in order to help each school attract and appoint staff of the highest calibre and with the necessary skills and attributes to fulfil the aims of the Trust and maximise pupil outcomes so that all young people can enjoy life in all its fullness.
- 1.2 The Trust is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection process for staff is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient and effective and promotes recruitment of the highest quality staff and equality of opportunity.
- 1.3 This policy has been designed to provide a framework which promotes good practice in line with best safer recruitment practices.
- 1.4 For these reasons, while still ensuring that the Trust complies with relevant legislation, any significant variations in recruitment practice must be discussed with the Trust before the process begins to minimise risk to the Trust.

## 2.0 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff to the Trust.
- 2.2 All Trustees, the Local Governing Board and employees involved at any stage of the recruitment and selection of staff should be aware of, and adhere to, the contents of this policy. The appointing Headteacher, CEO/DCEO in the event of the appointment of the Headteacher, **or relevant line manager for central team appointments**, is responsible for ensuring that all involved with the recruitment process have had access to this policy prior to their involvement in the process.
- 2.3 Throughout the recruitment and selection process, everyone involved must be mindful of the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy and Data Protection Policy.

## 3.0 Aims

- 3.1 The aims of the policy are:
  - To safeguard children and young people in each school;
  - To ensure that recruitment processes are robust, fit for purpose and can stand up to scrutiny;
  - To support the appointment of the best candidate for each position in order to undertake a specific role and make a contribution to the life of the school;
  - To meet the Trust's and individual schools operational requirements and strategic aims.
- 3.2 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:
  - Children's Act 1989
  - Children's Act 2004
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

- The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Education and Skills Act 2008
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Education Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010

3.3 This policy has due regard to guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Staffing and employment advice for schools'
- DfE (2020) 'Changes to checks for EU sanctions on EEA teachers from 1 January 2021'
- DfE (2021) 'Basic check ID checking guidelines from 1 July 2021'
- DfE (2024) 'Recruit teachers from overseas'
- DfE (2021) 'Right to work checks: employing EU, EEA and Swiss citizens'

3.4 The recruitment and selection process should always:

- promote the Trust's Christian vision and values;
- attract and retain a high calibre of staff;
- ensure the highest quality of teaching and support for all students;
- be competitive with other organisations especially in the areas and categories where recruitment is particularly difficult; and
- promote the most favourable image of the Trust.

#### 4.0 Personnel involved in the recruitment of staff

4.1 The Trust is the employer for all staff in DGAT schools and the central team. Before any appointments are considered by individual schools, the Trust must be informed and approve before schools go ahead to advertise. All adverts must be placed on the Trust website.

4.2 Consideration of the make-up of the panel will consider the nature and seniority of the position being filled. For the appointment of all headteachers, the Trust and the local governing board will be involved in the recruitment and selection process. The process will be led by the CEO. The DCEO/regional effectiveness leads will support all deputy headteacher appointments. For all other senior posts within an individual school the local governing board and headteacher will be involved in the recruitment and selection process. The headteacher is responsible for all other appointments. The relevant line manager is responsible for the appointment of central team staff.

4.3 The chair of the selection panel for any appointment will ensure that the process is transparent and equitable. They will also be responsible for managing the interview; conveying the verbal offer to a preferred candidate; gathering the evidence as a record of all stages of the recruitment process, including the reasons for selecting/rejecting each candidate.

## 5.0 The Christian foundation of the Trust and the recruitment process

- 5.1 If a DGAT school has a religious designation, it is important that the school can maintain and develop the Christian distinctiveness. In interviewing for a headteacher, regard must be given to candidate's ability and fitness to preserve and develop the religious foundation of the school. A third reference will be requested for headteacher candidates in schools with a religious designation from someone who can comment on the candidate's ability to commit to the school's Christian foundation.
- 5.2 The Equalities Act 2010 prevents employers from discriminating based on religion or belief unless there is a genuine occupational requirement (GOR) for a person to be of a particular faith in order to carry out that particular job.
- 5.3 In practice this means that the selection panel may choose to have a "practising Christian" or similar as one of their selection criteria. For further information about the application of faith-based criteria, the selection panel should consult the Head of Governance and People.

## 6.0 Requirement of staff involved in the recruitment process

- 6.1 Everyone involved in the recruitment process, and in particular chairs of selection panels, should ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the relevant employment legislation. At least one person on the selection panel must have undertaken and passed the relevant safeguarding training for safer recruitment.
- 6.2 If anyone 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 normally be necessary for the member of staff to avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection process.
- 6.3 Documentation relating to applicants will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA). Candidates have the right to feedback and, if they wish, to access any documentation relating to them in accordance with the DPA.

## 7.0 Review of vacancies

### of vacancies

- 7.1 The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the school improvement plan and budget has been completed. The headteacher is responsible for undertaking this review in schools and in the central team it will be the relevant member of the executive leadership team (ELT). The headteacher will communicate the findings to the chair of governors and the central team. ELT members will communicate their evaluation to the CEO.
- 7.2 The process of recruiting staff will consider the wider Trust's need and not just those of an individual institution. This will also take into consideration the school's budgetary position and operational safety should the appointment not be filled. Headteachers should check with the central team whether there are any staff at risk from redundancy in another school within the Trust who would be deemed eligible for this post.

- 7.3 Where an increase in pupil numbers generates the need for additional staff, it is the headteacher's responsibility to assess the level and nature of that need. The headteacher should report the conclusions of that assessment to the central team and seek approval for any increase in the number of posts. It is anticipated that this would normally form part of the annual budget process. All additional posts must be approved by the Trust before recruitment commences. Temporary contracts should be considered if the future of the post is uncertain.
- 7.4 Consideration must be given to whether vacancies can be filled by a part time appointment or a job share. The requirements of continuity for the learning experience of students are of primary importance.

## 8.0 Job description and person specification

- 8.1 The job description should outline the full duties and responsibilities of the job, whilst the person specification should outline the characteristics and attributes which are both essential and desirable from potential applicants. Subjective characteristics and attributes, e.g. good sense of humour should not be included. This should be published online with the recruitment materials.
- 8.2 When determining the person specification, DGAT schools should avoid setting standards of qualifications, experience or personal qualities which may unfairly discriminate against applicants on grounds of age, race, gender, sexuality or disability.
- 8.3 The person specification should be used to evidence the skills, expertise and attributes in the short-listing, interviewing and appointment process.
- 8.4 All appointments will be subject to a Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) at the appropriate level.

## 9.0 Application Form

- 9.1 The school should use a standard application form for the appointment of staff which is available on the Trust website. Central team appointments will use the standard central team application form.
- 9.2 The use of an application form is a standard recruitment tool. When shortlisting, the final page of the application form must be removed before sharing with the panel to ensure that the recruitment process is non-discriminatory and transparent. It also enables the Trust to monitor its equal opportunities policy.

## 10.0 Job Information Pack

- 10.1 The Trust has a job information pack which must be used for all vacancies, prior to advertising the vacancy. The pack should include:
- Application form
  - Equal opportunities monitoring form
  - Job description
  - Person specification
  - Background information on the school and the Trust
  - Contextual information, where appropriate (e.g. staffing structure)
  - Whether or not the position is open to ex-offenders

- Reminder that shortlisted candidates will be subject to an online search of publicly available information, including social media, prior to interview.

## 11.0 Sourcing Candidates

- 11.1 As a minimum, all vacancies will normally be advertised across the Trust **via the Trust website**. This will help maximise equality of opportunity and provide staff with opportunities for career development, thus maintaining the skills and expertise of existing staff. In extenuating circumstances, the headteacher **or recruiting ELT member** may waive the need to advertise. This is likely to include the following circumstances:
- Where positions may provide suitable alternative employment for existing staff whose post has been identified for redundancy, including the termination of fixed term contracts or following a restructuring exercise.
  - Positions requiring specialised expertise where the headteacher can demonstrate that a comprehensive search has been conducted and the nominated individual is the most suitable person for the position.
- 11.2 However, in the circumstances outlined above, if the successful candidate is likely to require a work permit the post must be advertised in line with the Work Permits (UK) Regulations.
- 11.3 Where it is deemed appropriate to go to external advert, all posts will be advertised using the most appropriate and cost effective medium to maximise the number of suitably qualified candidates. This may include local and national publications and websites and should adhere to the Trust's branding and visual identity. Internal advertisements should appear for a minimum of seven days and external advertisements should appear for a minimum of 14 days. All vacancy details must be passed to the central team so the post(s) can be advertised on the DGAT website and recorded for Education, Skills and Funding Agency purposes. **Schools should send vacancy information to [vacancies@dgat.org.uk](mailto:vacancies@dgat.org.uk) along with a completed recruitment pack and website submission form.**
- 11.4 Applicants will be treated with respect and provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding their suitability for the role.
- 11.5 All advertisements must include a short statement on safeguarding and equal opportunities. An individual school may use an agency or external consultancy to assist in recruiting staff where the vacancy is hard to fill only after consultation with the Trust.

## 12.0 Selection Process

- 12.1 The selection process for all posts should be:
- Transparent
  - Timely and cost effective
  - Equitable
  - Free from conflict of interest.
- 12.2 All recruitment **across the Trust** must be based on agreed job descriptions and person specifications. Recruitment and selection must be conducted as an evidence-based process and candidates should be assessed against agreed selection criteria, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualifications to perform the role as outlined in the person specification. All written evidence and the final decisions must be recorded and kept securely for a minimum of six months.

- 12.3 The size and composition of the selection panel will be determined considering the nature and seniority of the position being filled. Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least three individuals who are involved in the interviewing process. Panel members must be present at shortlistings either in person or remotely, and all elements of the interview process, as they must be party to all the evidence for each candidate.
- 12.4 Following the shortlisting process, the successful candidates **applying for a role in a school** will be invited to complete the self-declaration of their criminal records and suitability to work with children (Associate Staff Application Form). When this is received electronically, candidates will be asked to sign a hard copy of this completed declaration at the start of the interview process and ahead of the formal interview. These declarations will be submitted to the headteacher, or CEO/DCEO in the event of a headteacher's recruitment process, prior to interview. This information must only be disclosed to those that are authorised to see it in the course of their duties. The Trust aims to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential. Criminal records will be considered for recruitment purposes only when the conviction is relevant. Having an 'unspent' conviction will not necessarily bar a candidate from employment. This will depend on the circumstances and background to the offence(s). Failure to disclose this information may result in disciplinary action or dismissal by the Trust and may lead to criminal proceedings (refer to the Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy).
- 12.5 Once a short-list of candidates has been agreed there should be an online search undertaken by the SBM and the DSL as part of the recruitment process. This is to identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online. These should be **shared with the recruitment panel** and explored with the applicant at interview. The Trust form should be used to undertake this search to ensure consistency in process across the Trust.
- 12.6 In schools, interviews should normally be conducted by the headteacher and at least two other people and all interviews for a particular post must be conducted by the same panel. The Trust will lead the selection process of any headteacher, working with the local governing board. **For central team appointments, interviews will be conducted by the relevant ELT member and at least one other relevant person.**
- 12.7 Any skills tests (e.g. presentations, in-tray exercises) must be directly related to the role and measured against objective criteria, and presentations for one post must be assessed by the same persons. **Consideration should be given to ensuring skills tests are varied and should seek to enable all candidates to perform to the best of their ability.** Candidates must be notified of the details of any skills test when they are invited for interview and the selection process for teaching posts must include a presentation or demonstration of teaching skills.
- 12.8 Where required, all DGAT schools will make every effort to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities.
- 12.9 Interview questions must relate to the job requirements as exemplified in the person specification and the candidate's suitability for the position. The person specification should be used as the basis for determining the interview questions. All candidates must be asked the same initial questions – the exception being questions relating to information on the application form and contained within references. All questions must include and test out candidates understanding of safeguarding including finding out why they have applied for the post. Probing gaps in employment or frequent changes in employment should also be tested. **Consideration should be given to ensuring interview questions are varied and appropriate to the role. The recruitment panel may consider sharing a selection of interview questions with all candidates ahead of the interview as research shows that this may enable candidates with neurodiversity to perform better at interview.**



- 12.10 Interview questions must appear on an interview assessment form on which answers to questions are recorded.
- 12.11 References must be taken before interview however, no reference may be sought without the prior agreement of the candidate. This permission is requested on the application form. References must be actively scrutinised before interview to identify any areas of concern that may need to be explored with the candidate. Any reference should include whether the referee knows of any reason why the candidate would not be suitable to work with children.
- 12.12 Trust reference requests for both teachers, support staff and the central team are available on the DGAT central drive.
- 12.13 The choice of appointee will be determined by only the members of the selection panel.

### **13.0 Confidential References**

- 13.1 References should be completed by a senior person within the organisation and the **candidate's previous line manager should be their first referee, unless there is an exceptional circumstance preventing this.** However, where appropriate, for example an early career stage teacher, a tutor's reference would be acceptable.
- 13.2 Referees should be asked to state their relationship to the applicant.
- 13.4 Referees should be asked to confirm the employee's suitability to work with children and their reason for the candidate leaving their current/most recent position. **The lead recruiter should follow up any concerns with the referee to ensure clarity of information. This should be recorded within the candidate's recruitment information.**
- 13.5 Similarly, where a reference is ambiguous on a material point, further enquiries may be explored with the referee. **This should be recorded within the candidate's recruitment information.**
- 13.6 Referees should be asked to respond to predetermined questions or tailor their reference to the selection criteria for the post. Care must be taken to ensure that any questions asked are fair and based on the job role. The job description and person specification should be included with all reference requests.
- 13.7 The disclosure requirement is clearly stated in the contract of employment but should be explicitly stated during the selection process. This gives the candidate the opportunity to raise any known issues themselves before and during the interview.
- 13.8 All references received electronically should be checked to ensure that these originate from a legitimate source **e.g. checking they are not sent from a personal email address.**
- 13.9 All references received should be cross checked back with the candidate's application form to ensure that there are no discrepancies. Where there are, these should be clarified with the candidate.

### **14.0 Appointing Staff**

- 14.1 It is important to ensure that personal data used during, and retained after the interview process, is justifiable against any challenge of it being relevant and necessary. **The selection panel** may be asked

to prove that the non-selection of a candidate was on the basis of something other than a discriminatory attitude held by the interviewer. Applicants will have subject access rights regarding interview notes taken. It is for this reason that all interview notes must be legible and understandable. DGAT interview notes will be kept for a period of six months after the date of interview.

- 14.2 Offers of employment are dependent upon medical assessment, proof of qualifications and DBS check. This must be clearly stated in any correspondence.
- 14.3 A letter confirming any appointment must be sent to the successful candidate. **DGAT templates must be used.**
- 14.4 All appointments will be conditional on satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-appointment checks.
- 14.5 When appointing new staff, the following key checks will be completed:
- Verification of the candidate's identity
  - Obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (via the candidate) and, for candidates engaging in regulated activity, barred list information
  - Obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
  - Verification of a candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their role
  - Verification of the person's right to work in the UK
  - Verification of professional qualifications
  - Further checks on any individual who has lived or worked outside the UK
  - For those in management, trustee or local governor roles, a section 128 check will be carried out.
- 14.5.1 The recruitment panel will ensure any candidate employed to carry out teaching work is not subject to a prohibition order or any sanction or restriction imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE before its abolition in March 2012.
- 14.5.2 If the school has reason to believe that an individual is barred, it is an offence under section 9 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 for the school to allow the individual to carry out any form of regulated activity.
- 14.5.3 The school will use the Employer Secure Access sign-in portal via the Teaching Regulation Agency Teacher Services web page to check if a proposed senior staff member or local governor is barred because of being subject to a section 128 direction.
- 14.5.4 Checks for all prohibitions, directions, sanctions and restrictions will be carried out by using the secure access portal on the Teacher Services' [web page](#).
- 14.5.5 There is no requirement to obtain an enhanced DBS certificate or carry out checks for events that may have occurred outside the UK if, in the three months prior to their appointment, the candidate has worked:
- In a school in England in a post which brought them into regular contact with children or young persons; or
  - In any post in a school since 12 May 2006 which did not bring the person into regular contact with children or young persons.

14.6 For candidates who have lived outside the UK, all mandatory checks outlined in this policy will be carried out, along with additional checks where necessary. This includes the safer recruitment checks outlined in the KCSIE statutory guidance paragraph 262 – 267.

14.6.1 For candidates who have lived or worked outside the UK, the school will make further checks where necessary, including, but not limited to:

- Obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information, including for candidates who have not been to the UK before.
- For teaching staff, obtaining proof of their past conduct as a teacher from the professional regulating authority in the country in which they worked, where available.
- Obtaining evidence that candidates have the right to work in the UK through the government's [online portal](#), using a share code, or the candidate's date of birth.
- Obtaining proof of candidates' immigration status in the UK.

14.6.2 If a candidate is unable to provide the correct documentation, they cannot submit a DBS check. This is because the right to work in the UK cannot be established.

14.7 In the case of any employee working at a DGAT school who is sourced from an agency or third-party organisation, confirmation must be obtained from the organisation, in writing, that all necessary checks have been completed. Confirmation will also be obtained that the individual who presents for work is the same person on whom all checks have been completed. A copy of photographic identification will generally be kept where appropriate.

14.8 The school will ensure that enhanced DBS certificates and barred list checks are obtained on all salaried candidates for initial teacher training who are in regulated activity.

14.8.1 Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, it is the responsibility of the initial teacher training provider to carry out the necessary checks. The school will obtain written confirmation from the agency that the checks have been carried out.

14.9 If an existing member of staff moves from a post that was not regulated activity to one that is, the relevant checks will be carried out.

14.10 The recruitment panel will carry out further checks where there is a concern about a member of staff's suitability to work with children raised as part of these checks. An investigation will be carried out to gather enough evidence to establish if an allegation has a foundation it will be referred to the LADO for advice. This may result in a referral to the DBS. The DCEO must be consulted in this instance.

## **15.0 Employment of Ex-offenders**

15.1 The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 allows most convictions and cautions to be considered spent after a specified period of time. Once a caution or conviction is spent the person is considered rehabilitated and the ROA treats the person as if they had never committed an offence. This means that jobseekers with criminal records have the right to legally withhold such information from a prospective employer when applying for most jobs.

15.2 All positions that involve working with children are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants must therefore declare all previous convictions and cautions, including those which would normally be considered "spent" except those received for an offence committed in the United Kingdom if it has been filtered in accordance with the DBS filtering rules.

15.3 DGAT will undertake to treat all applicants for positions fairly and the separate policy for Employment of Ex-offenders sets out how recruitment panels must treat staff. This must be published on schools' websites and should be shared with candidates as part of the application pack.

## 16.0 Single Central Record

16.1 The school will maintain and regularly update its SCR and the DCEO will ensure the Trust SCR is updated for central team recruitment.

16.2 All new employees will be added to the record, which will include:

- All staff (including supply staff) who work at the school.
- All others who work in regular contact with children in the school or college, including volunteers.

16.3 The bullet points below set out the minimum information that must be recorded in respect of staff members (including teacher trainees on salaried routes). The record will indicate whether the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which each check was completed/certificate obtained:

- An identity check
- A stand-alone barred list check
- An enhanced DBS check (with children's barred list check) requested certificate provided
- A prohibition from teaching check
- Further checks on people living or working outside the UK, including checks for European Economic Area (EEA) teacher sanctions and restrictions
- A check of professional qualifications
- A section 128 check
- A check to establish the person's right to work in the UK
- For those in management, trustee or governor roles, a section 128 check.

16.4 For supply staff, a school will include whether written confirmation has been received that the employment business supplying the member of supply staff has carried out the relevant checks and obtained the appropriate certificates, and the date that confirmation was received and whether any enhanced DBS check certificate has been provided in respect of the member of staff.

16.5 The DBS Code of Conduct, published under section 122 of the Police Act 1997, advises that it is a requirement that all registered bodies must treat DBS applicants who have a criminal record fairly and not discriminate automatically because of a conviction or other information revealed.

16.6 Checks carried out on volunteers will be recorded in the SCR and listed in a separate volunteers tab.

## 17.0 Qualifications

17.1 All appointments are conditional upon documentary proof of the applicant's qualifications, ID and address (if applicable). This condition is clearly stated in the contract of employment but should be explicitly stated during the selection process. This should be seen at interview.

## **18.0 Storage of Information**

18.1 Appropriate and secure arrangements for storing disclosure documents during the recruitment process must be made. This information must be stored separately from personnel files and only those governors and senior members of staff directly involved in the recruitment process should have access to the documents. Records of the checks undertaken will be recorded on the DGAT staff check list.

## **19.0 Pay Decisions**

19.1 The pay decision will be made in line with the published pay policy, the experience and qualifications of the successful candidate and the previously approved salary band agreed, as advertised. When appointing a headteacher the decision will be taken by the CEO in consultation with the Local Governing Board having checked the ISR calculations.

## **20.0 Safer Recruitment Training**

20.1 At least one member of the recruitment panel will have completed formal safer recruitment training.

20.2 As a measure of good practice, the school will ensure that this training is renewed every three years.

20.3 Once a recruitment (or other relevant) decision has been made, disclosure information should not be kept for any longer than is absolutely necessary. For those applicants who are not appointed this should generally be for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. Once the retention period has elapsed, the school must ensure that any disclosure information is destroyed by secure means, e.g. by shredding.

## **21.0 Monitoring and Review of Policy**

17.1 This policy will be reviewed every year when safeguarding information is updated to ensure that it remains current.

## **22.0 Related Policies**

- Data Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Pay Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy

