

Safe Recruitment & Selection Policy August 2017

Reviewed by: Isla Lunan

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Endorsement

Full endorsement is given to this policy by:

Name: Claudia Goodbrand

Position: Cambridge Steiner School Trustee

Signed: 

Date: February 2019

Policy Statement

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education. Cambridge Steiner School (the School) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care and employing safe recruitment and selection processes. As an employer, the School expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued statutory guidance in The Education Act 2002, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018', 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015', Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, and The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

There is also legislation governing those persons in 'regulated activity' and requirements to carry out criminal records and barred list checks in accordance with statutory guidance (Keeping Children safe in education) and (Working together to safeguard children).

Following this Policy and the procedures contained therein will maximise the suitability of the appointed applicant for the post, will ensure that the School has done its utmost to deter and eliminate during the recruitment process any candidates unsuitable to work with children and young people, and will allow the recruitment process to run smoothly with all recruitment panel members working to the same sequence, procedures and time-scales, with the tasks at each stage clearly assigned and delineated.

Efficient organisation and an emphasis on prioritising safeguarding at the recruitment stage also sends a strong message to potential candidates about the standards of work and the behaviour expected at Cambridge Steiner School. This Policy refers equally to paid staff and people working within the School on a voluntary basis. Volunteers are subject to all legal recruitment and safeguarding requirements and regulations.

We are committed to recruiting a diverse workforce, which reflects the society in which we operate. It is the school's policy to recruit the most suitable person for each vacancy, regardless of sex, colour, race, nationality, national or ethnic origins, religion or beliefs, age, sexual orientation or disability. This will be achieved through fair and systematic recruitment procedures, which ensure that appropriate selection decisions are made to meet legal, business and best practice requirements in this area.

Purpose

The purpose of safer recruitment is ultimately to:

- **Deter.** From the beginning of the recruitment process, it is important to send the right message – that the school has a rigorous recruitment process and does not tolerate any form of abuse. Wording in adverts and recruitment information must aim to deter potential abusers.
- **Identify and Reject.** It will not always be possible to deter potential abusers. Therefore, careful planning for the interview and selection stage, in terms of asking the right questions, setting appropriate tasks and obtaining the right information can assist in finding out who is suitable for the role and who is not.
- **Prevent and Reject.** There are no guarantees that even the most robust safer recruitment process will prevent an inappropriate appointment. However, this does not mean it is too late to act. Ensuring that comprehensive induction processes are in place, together with appropriate policies and procedures, raising awareness through staff training and generally developing and maintaining a safe culture within the organisation will all help to prevent abuse or identify potential abusers.

The intention of this policy is to ensure that all stages of the recruitment process contain measures to deter, identify, prevent and reject unsuitable people from gaining access to pupils within the organisation. The policy and the practical implementation of recruitment and selection processes also aim to meet all legislative requirements as highlighted above, any statutory or other guidance that may from time to time be issued in order to keep children safe and safer recruitment in education, as well as principles of general good practice.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

Before a post can be filled, an up-to-date Job Description and Person Specification must exist. Clear, precise documents make it much easier to work out what skills, experience, knowledge, qualifications and personal attributes are required for a job, and ensure that all members of the recruitment panel possess the same focus and are working to the same outcomes. Current information on the nature and duties of the job should have been obtained from the previous post-holder as part of the exit interview process, and detailed aspects of both the Job Description and the Person Specification should be discussed in depth, with as many members of a setting as practicable providing their input into what they perceive to be the post-holder's duties and competencies. This might be achieved effectively through the means of a simple questionnaire.

Writing and Preparing Job Descriptions

The Cambridge Steiner School standard Job Description and Person Specification templates must always be used. Job descriptions and person specifications will also contain the schools commitment to promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care and employing safe recruitment and selection processes. These will be adapted to individual job roles, and the prompts therein will assist in this process.

The outline of a job description **must** include the following:

- The job title;
- The job title(s) to whom the post-holder reports;
- The job title(s) who report to the post-holder;
- The main purpose(s) of the job;
- The specific responsibilities.

The job description should:

- Be written in plain language;

- Give full details of the job;
- Carefully describe the duties and responsibilities of the post;
- Refer to the work environment where the duties of the job would take place;
- Provide a balanced picture of the role, and be honest about the opportunities *and* the challenges therein.

The Job Description should not include references to the competencies and attributes which the post holder is expected to have to execute the duties of the post. Such information should be contained in the Person Specification.

The average length of a Job Description is around one to two sides of A4, depending on the level of responsibility of the post holder. It **should not** be an exhaustive list of all the individual tasks or duties which the post-holder would be expected to carry out (this can be covered in the induction process), although it should broadly encompass the full range of responsibilities the post-holder will be expected to undertake.

The following statement should be included at the end of each Job Description:

“This Job Description is not an exhaustive list of duties and the post-holder will be required to undertake any other reasonable duties discussed and directed by the Line Manager”.

Writing and Preparing the Person Specification

The Person Specification is used at both the short-listing and interviewing stages of the recruitment process, and a properly prepared Person Specification is the key to avoiding biased and poor selection practices. A Person Specification should be written for all posts.

The existing Person Specification for a post to be recruited should be reviewed and rewritten to take into account any changes since the document was produced. If there is no existing Person Specification, one must be written by the Resources Manager, with appropriate input from relevant staff/trustees.

The Person Specification should also state whether the post is or is not exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) and therefore whether it requires a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (formerly CRB).

In devising a Person Specification, you should:

- Analyse the Job Description to identify the key duties and responsibilities of the post;
- Convert each group of job duties into the appropriate skills, experience, knowledge or abilities needed to carry out the job;
- Include a wide range of experiences and allow for cultural differences;
- Emphasise the experience/skills required rather than the qualifications required, especially where a formal qualification is not essential for the performance of the job;
- Be **specific** – use terminology such as, “*You must demonstrate that...*” and “*You must have a proven ability to...*”.

What should not be included in a Person Specification?

The Person Specification must **not** specify:

Age:

- unless age is a requirement for fulfilling a task in the Job Description and the reason is clearly identified in the Person Specification and can be objectively justified; or
- an age restriction has been imposed by an external statutory body.

Sex or Race:

- unless a genuine occupational qualification can be proved under the relevant section of the Sex or Race Discrimination Acts.
- Specifications must not contain factors which could constitute **indirect discrimination**, eg. requirement for an English A-Level (but it is possible to use wording such as, “You must be able to demonstrate a good standard of English”, if this is required for the role), or require a certain number of years’ experience (instead state the specific competencies/experience/knowledge you are looking for).

Advertising a Post

Advertising a post appropriately is the fundamental first step towards safe recruitment. It is best practice to advertise as widely as possible within the appropriate sector(s) in order to eliminate discrimination and generate the best possible pool of shortlisted candidates. The wording in the advertisement, however short, is crucial in attracting strong applicants and in putting off people who would not be suitable, or who are not suitable for working with children or vulnerable adults. Giving reasons for specific requirements, (eg. a childcare qualification is essential for meeting legal staff-child ratios) deters people who do not possess these, and also demonstrates the professional nature of the School. Different wording will elicit different responses – it is important to think carefully about what the desired outcome should be.

The advert should include:

- The School name and logo;
- A sentence giving a true reflection into the ethos of the School – why would a potential applicant choose to work here?;
- Location of the job;
- Position title;
- Status of contract (permanent or fixed-term);
- Key qualifications (if genuinely required for the role);
- Anticipated start date;
- Salary or salary range;
- A statement of commitment to Equal Opportunities;
- A statement of commitment to Safe Recruitment and Child Protection;
- A statement that the appointment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, a satisfactory DBS check and any other vetting requirements;
- A statement that evidence will be required of proof of eligibility to work in the UK, and proof of qualifications;
- Deadline for applications;
- How to apply/obtain the application form;
- How to obtain the Job Description and Person Specification (attach these where possible if the advert is electronic);
- Contact email/address/telephone number for applications and queries.

Please note that, when recruiting from abroad, there may be additional requirements, such as the Resident Labour Market Test required by the UK Borders Agency.

Please see Appendix for a list of places to advertise positions, some of which are free of charge.

The Application Form

Always ask applicants to complete an application (never a CV and/or cover letter). This is to allow the recruitment panel full control over the information received and used to assess the candidates, and also to

promote a fair application process wherein candidates are assessed on the same criteria, based only on the Job Description and the Person Specification. Hand-written and electronic applications should both be accepted, but candidates must not be judged on their standard of handwriting.

The School should set a deadline for applications and keep to it, usually providing at least two weeks from the date of advertisement for candidates to complete and return their form, which should be available on the School website, and in hard copy on request (contact details should be provided in the advert).

A small application pack should be sent out with the application form, comprising some background information on Steiner Waldorf education and the School.

The application form should include the following:

- The questions/information requested should be based solely on the requirements of the Job Description and the Person Specification;
- All personal information (name, address, etc.) should be requested on the front page, so that this may be detached for the short-listing process, to ensure a fair selection procedure. The front and second pages should contain a box in which to input the candidate's personal identification number (a list of these should be kept separately by a member of administration – see Appendix);
- A sentence stating when references will be requested (see section below on references), and why these will be requested;
- Sentence(s) regarding Disclosure and Barring Service check, ID and qualifications checks (always include a self-declaration (see Reference Request Form));
- A question specifically asking, “Have you ever been the subject of allegations, complaints and/or Human Resources procedures, etc., within any employment or position of responsibility within your personal life?”;
- A question requiring the applicant’s response to reveal evidence of his/her safeguarding awareness and competencies;
- The form should be worded to allow telling gaps in work/life experience to be clearly revealed, eg. requiring a candidate's employment history to be given in chronological order (starting with the most recent), with dates listed as '**From... (month, year) To... (month, year)**';
- Specifically ask applicants to give a picture of their personal hobbies and interests – far from being a 'filler', this information provides an important picture of a person's work-life balance, and can be instrumental (as part of the overall assessment) in indicating a person who is not appropriate to work with children, or who should perhaps be questioned further (eg. if all of their interests centre around spending time with children, with little else to provide balance).
- A statement to the effect that late and incomplete applications will not be considered.

Under no circumstances should any of the questions be discriminatory in relation to race, age, disability, sex, marital status, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, religion or any grounds upon which discrimination can occur as defined in law. It is especially important to be aware that questions regarding a candidate's health and impact of any medical conditions on his or her ability to work are illegal under the Disability Discrimination Act, unless it can be genuinely and clearly evidenced that this information is required for the safe and effective performance of the role, **and** this assessment is carried out by medical professionals (ie. in the form of an authorised medical questionnaire through an external health agency). The **only** question which is otherwise permissible is, “*Are there any reasonable adjustments **we** should make to enable you to do the job?*”

Questions regarding family planning (pregnancy, etc.) are also illegal under Sex Discrimination laws.

'Positive discrimination' at the advertising stage (i.e. "We particularly welcome applications from women and from people from ethnic minorities") is lawful at the advertising stage **if it is addressing an under-representation of these specific sectors in the School compared with the representation in the local community**. However, this 'discrimination' **must not** be applied at any other stage of the recruitment process, and indeed should not be possible if the front pages of all applications are removed prior to short-listing.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

All equal opportunities monitoring forms and the front personal details form should be removed from the application forms prior to short-listing and should not be seen by the panel.

Applicants are not obliged to complete a monitoring form, but short-listed candidates who have not completed the form attached to their application form should be encouraged to complete one on arrival for interview. This is to allow the School to monitor and improve its advertising campaigns within the equal opportunities guidelines, to ensure that as many people as possible have access to job information irrespective of their race, sex, age, level of (dis)ability, etc.

Please see our Equal Opportunities Policy for further information.

Short-listing Candidates

The panel should be established **as soon as the post has been advertised and a panel chair appointed** (usually the line manager of the vacant post). A timetable for short-listing and interviewing should be agreed and disseminated, usually allowing **at least a week** for candidates to be notified of their interview date. As stated above, the front page of all application forms should be removed at this stage, and the applications assessed anonymously. The School's standard short-listing selection tools must always be used, and should refer to applicants by applicant number only, and not by name.

It is best practice to avoid a sliding scale of scoring (i.e. 1 – 10), the interpretation of which can be widely subjective, and to use instead the following terms, which provide greater consistency across the short-listing panel:

- 1 Criterion Fully Met;
- 0.5 Criterion Partially Met;
- 0 Criterion Not Met.

Short-listing is the point at which the recruitment process often goes wrong. The Person Specification must be robust enough to short-list against – a Specification which can be met by 80% of the population would not be much help, but one that can be met by only 1% may be discriminatory in nature, and would not be much help either if not enough people are able to apply.

If a person has stated on their application form that they have been the subject of any allegations at work, etc., these should be disregarded for the purposes of short-listing, and investigated after this stage (but prior to interview).

When drawing up the short-list, the selection panel **must**:

- Agree as a panel their understanding of the *key criteria* in each Person Specification (the weighting of these in the scoring may be legitimately increased);
- Be clear at the start what their **ideal** and **minimum** candidate scores should be;
- Measure the attributes of each candidate methodically against each requirement in the Person Specification and the Job Description (but **not** against other candidates);

- Judge applicants only against the Person Specification used in the advertising process. This means that no part of the original Person Specification should be changed at a later stage;
- Assess applicants based on **information given**, rather than on information you **think** they have given by 'reading between the lines';
- Assess applicants against the **essential criteria** of the Person Specification only, and **not** the desirable criteria (this is used post-interview to choose between the final two or three short-listed candidates);
- Record reasons for rejecting an applicant in writing on the short-listing form;
- Ensure that all original material used in creating a short-list is filed with the recruitment records; **and**
- Ensure that all panel members have declared any personal or social relationships or contacts they may have with any of the candidates.

The selection panel **must not**:

- Introduce any new standards, qualifications or experience in the Person Specification during or after the short-listing process;
- Casually sift through the application forms in advance to get an impression of suitable candidates;
- Short-list any candidates who do not meet the key criteria;
- Continue the recruitment process with the current applicants if none satisfy the key criteria (the post should be re-advertised if this is the case);
- Take into account the standard of handwriting in the application form as a means of determining the candidate's level of skills or abilities, unless handwriting is a key criterion; **or**
- Exclude a candidate from the short-list on the grounds of his or her age, sex, sexuality, marital status, physical or mental abilities, disability or illness, religious or cultural background, political or trade union activities, ethnic background or social background.

All short-listed applicants will be sent:

- Invitation to interview letter/email. Reference should be made to the section of the application form which asks candidates to detail any reasonable adjustments to be made for interview to ensure compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Candidates should be asked to bring with them proof of eligibility to work in the UK;
- Directions to get to the venue;
- Any other information which will assist candidates in orienting themselves to the post applied for (eg. school prospectus); **and**
- Details of any tests and/or presentations candidates may be required to take/prepare.

All applicants rejected at the short-listing stage should be sent the first rejection letter.

Asylum & Immigration Act 1996: Prevention of Illegal Working

It is a criminal offence to employ a person who is not entitled to live or work in the UK. The maximum penalty for doing so is £5,000 for each employee found not to have the entitlement.

All candidates invited to interview should be requested to bring with them proof of their eligibility to work in the UK. Copies of any documents seen **must** be taken by the designated person at interview stage and copied. All candidates will be asked for evidence, regardless of ethnic origin.

Legally Employing Overseas Candidates

In order to legally recruit candidates from overseas, the School must conform to the government requirements, which can be obtained from the UK Border Agency. These requirements may include performing a Residential Labour Market Test (are there any appropriately skilled workers within the UK/EU)

and may necessitate specific advertising requirements to be met. Please see the UK Border Agency website for further information.

Requesting References

References should be requested after the short-listing stage, but before the interview stage as part of the School's safe recruitment procedure. This must be stated clearly on the application form, in order to let the applicant know that referees will be contacted without notice unless the School is specifically contacted by the applicant pre-interview, giving good reasons why this should not be done. In this way, the onus is on the applicants to contact us, not the other way around. Employers have the automatic right to request references from a candidate's current or most recent employer even if they have not been identified as referees on the application form. However, the School should remain sensitive to the fact that the employer may not be aware of a candidate's intention to leave the company, and it is best practice to inform the candidate first (unless they have included this employer in the referees section of the form).

References should be sought **directly** from the named referees, and not from any third party (eg. a secretary or other colleague). A minimum of **two** references should be obtained for each short-listed candidate. The key questions to ask on the form are, "Would you re-employ the candidate in **the same** role?" and "Is he/she suitable, in your opinion, to work with children?"

The application form should also state, as a deterrent to people who would be unsuitable for the post or to work with children, **why** references are requested by the School (ie. to ensure that the candidate is suitable, is presenting him/herself accurately, and is not unsuitable for working with the vulnerable).

It is perfectly acceptable for a candidate to nominate a supervisor from a voluntary role as a referee. Personal references, however, should not be accepted. If an applicant has not previously been employed or retained in a voluntary capacity, the panel should request a reference from his/her most recent educational establishment.

Cambridge Steiner School's standard letter and reference request form must always be used when requesting references. These should be sent with a copy of the Job Description and Person Specification, and also a stamped addressed envelope to facilitate the return of the reference if it is being requested by post.

If time is short, a verbal reference may be requested, but the person receiving the reference via telephone should take dated notes and either post or email this sheet to the referee asking them to sign and return a slip or confirm by email that they confirm the reference to be accurate. The questions asked verbally should mirror exactly those asked of other candidates on the written form.

The School should never accept "To Whom it May Concern" references, as these are not specific enough and may be faked.

The panel should always verify the identity of **all** referees on receipt of references (either by telephone or email). Any discrepancies (eg. from the information given on the application form) should **always** be followed up by telephone.

If for any reason references for the successful candidate have not arrived at the time of selection, then the letter of appointment **must** say that the offer is subject to satisfactory references and checks (it is best practice to state this regardless).

If any reference received indicates that the candidate is banned from or is unsuitable for working with children or young people, **the candidate must be eliminated from the recruitment process at this stage if the information received is subsequently evidenced to the satisfaction of the panel.**

The School has an arrangement with the Human Resources advice company, Northgate Arinso, whereby they will check all references received on our behalf for a small fee.

The panel should remember that candidates have the right to see their references (as all other notes and documents pertaining to them from the recruitment process) upon request. It is best practice to state this clearly on the reference request form for referees.

The School should store the references securely during and following the recruitment process, in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and destroy documents it no longer needs to retain.

Remember to allow enough time to obtain references when planning the recruitment schedule.

Interviewing

All candidates, whether internal or external, are to be treated equally at all times. The same amount of time should be allocated to all candidates, and they should be assessed on what they say and evidence, and not on what the panel believes it knows about them.

Ideally, only one interview should take place per day to allow each candidate to be scored freshly, without direct comparisons to other candidates. If this is not possible, the interviews should be as spaced out as possible.

It should be remembered that the interview is only one method of assessing a candidate, and that safer and more effective practice and a clearer and fuller picture of a potential staff member can be achieved by utilising multiple assessment methods. These might include short tests where these are appropriate to the position - eg. computer skills, typing, teaching part of a lesson (care should be taken not to discriminate on any of the grounds mentioned above). An observed collaborative task involving a group of candidates can provide an excellent insight into a person's working processes and team-working skills. **It is important not to over-rely on any one aspect of the recruitment process, but to use each stage and multiple methods to provide a full and balanced picture of the candidates' skills and experience.**

The interviewing procedure should reflect the following:

- The interview room and furniture arrangements should be planned carefully so as to provide a non-threatening environment, whilst still giving a professional message to candidates;
- The interview panel should consist of the same people as the short-listing panel, and should meet for a **minimum** of thirty minutes prior to the interview sessions commencing to carefully read through the Job Description, Person Specification, Safe Recruitment and Selection Policy and interview questions, and to ensure clarity regarding the timetable and each panel member's particular tasks during the interviews. In addition, **at least twenty minutes should be allowed prior to each interview** to refer to the candidate's application and to read through the interview questions once more. The scoring of a candidate should take place **immediately after** each interview to ensure that candidates are assessed only against the criteria of the Job Description and the Person Specification (and **not** against each other), and adequate time **must** be allowed between each interview to allow for these requirements to be met;
- **There should be at least two people on an interview panel, and ideally three. More than four people would be excessive and threatening to the candidates;**
- One member of each interview panel should be a Trustee wherever possible;
- Both sexes should be represented on the interview panel wherever possible;
- No panel member should be related to any of the applicants;
- One member of each interview panel should have completed a Safe Recruitment training course (this may be the Trustee);

- A timetable for the interviews should be set and be maintained;
- The panel should be very clear on who will be taking notes and who will be asking which questions;
- The interview record proforma should always be used for all note-taking, and the panel should be aware that candidates are allowed to request to see their notes and all scoring/short-listing sheets pertaining to themselves). Notes should be brief and factual;
- All of the candidates should present their proof of eligibility to work in the UK and their qualifications prior to the interview. These should be copied and returned to the candidates, with the copies subsequently stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act and with due reverence to confidentiality, and the copies pertaining to the unsuccessful applications being destroyed immediately upon the acceptance of the post by the successful applicant;
- It is important to be very clear at the start of every interview that the School is committed to safe recruitment practices and child protection;
- The panel members should maintain good eye-contact with the candidates when addressing them and listening to their responses. This is why it is important for each member of the panel to be clear who is taking notes/asking questions, and in what order (also, good note-taking helps prevent the panel from “filling in the gaps” erroneously from memory at a later time);
- The percentage split of 'talk time' should be approximately 30% of the talking done by the members of the panel, and 70% by the candidate;
- It is important to give the candidates the opportunity to ask questions themselves, and include a tour of the School beforehand if possible;
- **In most cases, a minimum of seven days' notice should be given to candidates invited for interview (from the day they will receive the invitation).**

Composing Interview Questions

A reasonable number of principal questions for an interview lasting 45 minutes to one hour is **six to eight**. While the **sub-questions** (see below) will differ somewhat, all candidates should have the sense of **having had the same interview** (for example, if they were to discuss it together afterwards, no candidate would feel that they had been asked wildly different questions or been treated differently).

All interview questions should be prepared in advance, and the principal questions should be the same for all candidates being interviewed, with the exception of the **first question**, which should be derived from the application form (e.g. *“We noticed that... Could you please tell us more about...”*).

Additional sub-questions should be used and tailored during the interview to the candidates' replies in order to probe further, both as to their suitability for the post, and to their suitability to work with children (this is where sub-questions may differ between candidates as they are based on the same principal questions), and to substantiate the content of the initial replies. It is acceptable to keep pressing the candidate until the required information is forthcoming (ie. their response is supported satisfactorily or evidenced to be insubstantial). Sub-questions may also be used, where they flow naturally from the conversation, to ask for more information that is individual to the candidates, perhaps based on a link between a comment they have made and something the panel has picked up on from the application form. It will not be possible in the main to pre-draft these sub-questions as they will be based mainly on the candidates' responses, but if the proper preparation procedure is followed, the information given in the candidates' application forms will be clear in the interview panel's minds and further questioning will come easily.

When the panel hears “we” in a response, it should always probe further to receive an “I” response – ie. “I understand that your group did xyz, but what did you as an individual contribute to the project?”. Past performance is the best indicator of future performance, so the panel should also avoid conditional statements, such as, “I would work in such a way...”, and insist on responses reflecting what the candidate has actually done in a parallel or similar situation, or past duties/positions held.

The panel should be aware that direct questions lead to a focused answer, whereas open questions can lead to open-ended and sometimes vague responses. There is a place for both types of question in the interview, but they should be used carefully to complement each other and elicit information as required, rather than due to an accident of wording. **Questions should be designed to oblige the candidate to give the panel the information it wants, and not the information he/she wants to give.**

The candidates will be as good as the panel helps them to be, and it is in the School's interest to design questions and create an ambience conducive to drawing out the best the candidates have to offer, as well as highlighting any inconsistencies. Questions can be “sign-posted” to indicate the information that is desired, without leading the candidate or answering for him/her.

When choosing the wording of interview questions, the following should be taken into consideration:

- Questions should be based on the requirements of the Job Description and Person Specification **only**;
- Questions may be based on the desirable criteria in addition to the essential criteria at this stage (but the essential criteria should be used **first** when scoring);
- The first questions should be designed to ensure that the information provided by candidates in their application forms is genuine and tallies with their replies at interview;
- Past performance is the best indicator of future behaviour. It is better to avoid the conditional tense when questioning (“*What would you do if...?*”) and instead to ask for specific instances from the past (“*Can you give us an example of a time when... and what was your reaction?*”);
- Career breaks and gaps in employment should be particularly probed, as should the candidates' work-life balance;
- **At least** two interview questions should be designed from a safeguarding perspective to probe the candidate's suitability for working with children.

The “Ws” are a good guide for how to start questions off:

- What?
- Why?
- Who?
- Where?
- When?
- [Ho]w?

Scoring Interviews

Notes taken during interview should be written on the standard interview proforma form, which should provide columns for:

- (a) **Question (or Sub-Question) Number;**
- (b) **Notes of Response;**
- (c) **Score.**

Notes should be written in short, bullet point form and **must always be factual.**

The standard interview selection tool should always be used to score the candidates. As stated above, the final scoring of a candidate should take place **immediately after** each interview to ensure that candidates are assessed only against the criteria of the job and the Person Specification (and not against each other). Candidates should be scored based on their response to each question on a scale of 0-5 by each interviewer separately (ie. before any discussion with the other panel members). As at the short-listing stage, the panel must **score on the basis of evidence given**, and not on what you think the candidate is saying, or the

impression you have received 'reading between the lines'. Adequate time **must** be allowed between each interview for this purpose, and any discussion should focus on the questions asked and the notes taken during the interview, and with reference to the Job Description and the Person Specification. **It is important to remember that any notes, scores or other written comments made about a candidate must be provided in full to him or her on request.** If the panel follows the selection process described here, it will not be leaving itself open to any potential disputes about the unfairness or inappropriate nature of the selection process.

Selection decisions tend to frequently be made by panel members early on during the interview (typically within the first four minutes). The panel should be careful of this as it is neither good practice nor based on an accurate picture of the candidate. Panel members are also frequently 'attracted' to interviewees who are most like themselves, and this can often be evident in their scoring. It is important to believe the evidence, not just what people say or what the panel feels might be the case.

Candidates should **only** be compared directly against each other (still in conjunction with the Person Specification) if and when the majority of the candidates have been eliminated during the short-listing process, and only two or three eligible candidates remain with equal scores. At this stage, where all remaining candidates could be confidently offered the position, the preferred criteria really come into their own in helping to determine which candidate would truly be better for the School.

The panel should **never** inform a candidate at interview whether he/she has been successful or not, even if there is only one candidate. It is essential that the panel follows the appropriate scoring procedures to determine suitability.

For a teaching post, more than one member of the interview panel should witness all short-listed candidates actively teaching. This should be a required element of the interview and any candidates not consenting to this should not be interviewed.

Pay and conditions of employment (references, DBS check, proof of qualifications/ID/eligibility to work in the UK, etc.) should be explained clearly at the interview to avoid subsequent misunderstanding.

Job Offer

The successful applicant must be advised in writing of the offer of employment (letter of appointment).

The letter of appointment should include the following:

- Agreed start date where this has been confirmed
- Salary
- Terms and conditions (DBS check, etc.)

Unless there is a good reason not to, the statement of the main terms and conditions of employment should be sent with the letter of appointment so that the candidate has a clear picture of the School's offer.

An additional copy of the letter of acceptance and statement of terms and conditions of employment should also be enclosed (with a stamped addressed envelope), with a slip at the bottom for the successful candidate to sign and return to confirm that they have received and understood the offer, and that they accept (or do not accept) the position under the terms and conditions given. When this is returned, it should be filed in a newly-created staff file (if the candidate has accepted the offer). The staff member should then be added immediately to the School's Single Central Register.

The following should be given to the new employee before or shortly after commencing employment (some of these documents may form part of the Staff Contract, which must be presented to the employee within two months):

- Statement of the Main Terms and Conditions of Employment (if not sent with offer letter)
- Job Description
- Employee Handbook
- Discipline and Grievances Procedure (contained within the Employee Handbook)
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunities & Inclusion Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Security Policy & Procedures
- Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Complaints and Concerns Policy
- Admissions Policy and Procedure
- Positive Behaviour & Discipline Policy (Early Years and/or Lower School) (if appropriate)
- New Staff Member Form
- Emergency Care Form
- Confidentiality Statement (for volunteers)
- Medical Questionnaire (if appropriate)
- Disqualification by Association Form (if appropriate)

The most important operational policies and procedures listed above should also be discussed in sufficient detail (as required for each post) with all new staff members during their induction.

Unsuccessful Candidates

All unsuccessful candidates should receive an interview rejection letter/email advising them that they have not been successful in obtaining the post. Should an unsuccessful candidate request feedback, this should be prepared by the panel chair and sent via the Resources Manager.

Pre-Employment Checks

Individuals will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' where they:

- Will be responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Will carry out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engage in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once.

All employees, workers, trustees and volunteers engaged by the School are likely to be deemed to be in 'Regulated Activity', whatever their role and are, therefore, subject to a full Enhanced with Barred List check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The majority of checks must be satisfactorily completed before a prospective new employee/volunteer starts work. Apart from the requirement to satisfactorily complete an induction or probationary period during the initial stages of employment in relevant cases, the only other check that may still be pending on starting work is the full Enhanced DBS with Barred List check. In exceptional circumstances, where the full check has not been received, the employee/volunteer will be supervised until it has been received and

deemed satisfactory. However, the Barred List part of the check **must have been obtained** prior to an individual starting work.

In any event, it should be noted that new employees will not be able to commence work and will not be placed on the payroll until the following have been received:

- Two satisfactory references (*unless it has not been possible to obtain one or more references and the school has, exceptionally, decided to proceed with the appointment on the basis of other checks carried out*);
- Relevant qualification certificates;
- Evidence to meet the requirements of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006;
- A satisfactory Barred List Check and submission of a full Enhanced DBS application. (*It should be noted that the school's normal requirement is that a full, new satisfactory DBS check has been received prior to commencement and placement on the payroll*);
- For relevant posts, a declaration completed by the individual to ensure that s/he is not disqualified under childcare disqualification requirements set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009;
- Valid Home Office (UK Visas and Immigration) permission to work in the post;
- Teachers only - confirmation that s/he is not subject to a prohibition order or interim prohibition order;
- For anyone taking up a management position – confirmation that he/she is not subject to any Section 128 barring directions;
- Confirmation that there are no teacher sanctions or restrictions that a European Economic Area (EEA) professional regulating authority has imposed upon that person.

Overseas Candidates

If a candidate has lived or worked overseas for more than three months at any point in the past ten years (*updated from five years February 2018*), an overseas Police Check/Certificate of Good Conduct will be requested from the relevant country. Where the candidate has worked in a school in the UK during a period which ended not more than three months before appointment, the School is entitled to decide to carry out only the standard checks (ISI Regulatory Requirements Part 4 Para 18 (4)).

The School must remain aware of all current vetting and barring legislation, as this frequently changes.

Staff and volunteers working with children are also asked to confirm that they have taken medical advice to confirm that any medication they are taking won't impair their ability to look after children properly.

Use of Agency Workers

On occasion it may be necessary to utilise workers provided by an external agency, for example to cover short to medium-term absences or vacancies. In order to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young persons, it is essential that agencies supplying workers to the education sector also adopt robust recruitment and vetting procedures that minimise the risk of employing people who may abuse them, or who are otherwise unsuited to such work. In these circumstances, agencies will be required to provide written assurances about their recruitment and selection practices and, in particular, that workers supplied by them have been subject to the same checks and safeguards in place for new employees and workers taken on directly by the School. For this purpose, agencies will normally be required to complete a standard questionnaire to the satisfaction of the Resources Manager before workers will be accepted from a particular organisation.

The standard questionnaire issued to agencies for written confirmation that all necessary checks are carried out before their workers are deployed will include all essential areas of the checking process, ie. relating to Enhanced DBS and Barred List checks, checks to meet the childcare disqualification requirements under the Childcare Act 2006 and Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009, prohibition order checks, identity and

Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act checks, as well as checks of medical fitness (where appropriate), qualifications, references, reasons for leaving previous positions, employer's liability insurance, equal opportunities, health and safety and compliance with Agency Worker Regulations.

The School will check the identity of the person presenting themselves for work on arrival.

Use of Volunteers

Children and young people will see volunteers within a school or other educational service in the same way as its other employees. They will not know that they are unpaid and will assume they are safe and trustworthy adults, just like anyone else within their educational environment. Therefore, volunteers should also be subject to a checking process to ensure that they are indeed safe to be in contact with pupils. The principles of safer recruitment should be applied whether an individual is paid or unpaid.

Volunteers may be used in a variety of different roles. Safer recruitment principles will be adapted and/or applied with common sense depending upon an individual's involvement and interaction with pupils, whether it is regular contact or 'one-off', whether they are being supervised etc. For example, if a parent volunteers as part of a group helping out on a one-off basis such as a fete or a day trip, there is no need for a formal recruitment or checking process. However, if a volunteer is likely to have an on-going role that includes regular contact with children, then a similar recruitment and selection process will be applied as would be used to recruit an employee. The process may be presented in a less formal manner, but the principles of safer recruitment are the same. In these cases, the recruitment process will include:

- Provision of information about the School's commitment to the safeguarding of children;
- The requirement to complete an application form specially designed for volunteers;
- Obtaining references;
- A face-to-face interview;
- Where the individual is deemed to be in 'regulated activity', an Enhanced DBS with Barred List check OR where the individual will be adequately supervised and, therefore, not in regulated activity, an Enhanced Disclosure without Barred List check;
- Where the individual will be working in a relevant role, a check to ensure that s/he is not disqualified under childcare disqualification requirements set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009;
- Any other checks considered to be relevant to the role.

Volunteers will be provided with an appropriate induction as referred to below.

Single Central Register (SCR)

The School will ensure that it complies with statutory requirements for information to be recorded and retained on its SCR of pre-employment checks carried out in relation to trustees, employees and workers employed or engaged directly, as well as others who work in regular contact with children, including volunteers.

Generally, the information that will be recorded on these persons is whether or not the following checks have been carried out or certificates obtained, and the date on which the checks were completed:

- an identity check;
- a check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom;
- a Barred List check;
- an Enhanced DBS check;
- a check of professional qualifications;
- additional checks on people living or working outside the UK;
- for relevant posts, a check to meet childcare disqualification requirements set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009;

- for teaching posts, a prohibition from teaching check including prohibitions/sanctions given by other EEA countries;
- for management posts, a section 128 direction check.

There is no requirement to keep copies of DBS certificates in order to fulfil the duty of maintaining the SCR. However, where the School chooses to retain a copy, this will not be retained for longer than six months. A copy of the other documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity, right to work and required qualifications will be kept for the personnel file.

Written confirmation that the necessary pre-employment checks have been carried out will also be obtained from any employment agencies/businesses and other organisations supplying workers and attached to the SCR.

Other Record Keeping and Retention of Personal Data

Data relating to all recruitment and selection processes will be retained for a specified period of time.

Retention of Data relating to Unsuccessful Applicants

All application forms, long/shortlisting grids, interview notes and any other documentation used will be securely retained on a recruitment file for a period of six months from the end date of the selection process (ie. from the date when a conditional offer has been made and other candidates informed that they have been unsuccessful). The information will be destroyed in a confidential manner after this period of time.

Retention of Data for Successful Applicants

All application forms, long/shortlisting grids, interview notes and any other documentation used will be securely retained on a personnel file. This information forms part of the individual's personal record and on-going employment history.

The personnel records of all employees will be retained for a minimum of seven years after they have left the employment. However, **where an employee has been the subject of an allegation(s)** the record will be retained at least until the accused has reached **normal retirement age or for a period of 10 years if that is longer.**

All personal data will be handled in a confidential manner at all times and retained and disposed of securely. Any information that is provided to the School that is not relevant will be destroyed. Similar principles will be applied in relation to the retention and handling of records relating to volunteers.

Induction

Induction is an extension of the recruitment process. Good recruitment and selection procedures help to ensure that the best person is appointed to the role, but it is equally important to induct him or her properly on commencement. A general induction programme is required for all new recruits, including those already within the organisation but appointed to new roles. The general induction, applicable to all, will include a variety of arrangements and areas. The specific arrangements put in place will reflect the differing needs of individuals and job roles, eg. whether already employed in a different role, whether full-time, part-time, fixed-term, employee or volunteer, type and seniority of the post and level of contact or involvement with pupils.

The general induction programme will also include, **for all**, information on professional standards and boundaries in respect of child protection and safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Reference will be made to relevant statutory requirements and/or local guidance in these areas. Statutory guidance includes, in particular, the DfE documents:

- ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ - all staff will be required to read at least ‘Part One – Safeguarding Information for All Staff’; and
- ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ - which should be read and followed by all staff.

The importance of adhering to school policies and procedures in these and all other areas will also be emphasised. Care will be taken to ensure that all new employees, including those in new roles, are aware of and understand school policies, procedures and practices and are clear about their responsibilities in following them at all times.

Supply teachers and other supply workers, including agency workers, as well as volunteers, will receive all necessary information and guidance to enable them to carry out their role effectively and in accordance with statutory requirements, as well as the School’s policies, procedures and practices. This will include in relation to child protection and safeguarding arrangements, and any other relevant protocols essential to their role.

A Safe Culture and Ongoing Vigilance

It is never sufficient to assume that a safer recruitment and selection process and robust induction arrangements are enough to ensure that the pupils are safe and that there is no risk to them within the educational environment. Creation of a safe culture, with ongoing vigilance is essential. The School will continue to strive to create and maintain a safer culture by:

- Having in place, and putting into practice, clear policies and procedures and ensuring that all employees and workers are aware of and understand them;
- Setting acceptable standards of behaviour;
- Having in place clear procedures for reporting concerns, ensuring that all employees and workers know what the procedures are and their responsibility for following them;
- Taking concerns seriously and providing support to individuals raising them;
- Taking appropriate action in relation to concerns raised;
- Having in place robust and appropriate induction arrangements;
- Ensuring that all employees, trustees, volunteers and workers undertake child protection and other relevant training on a regular basis;
- Keeping the commitment to safeguarding and child protection on the agenda through regular discussion and/or reminders at staff meetings, training sessions etc;
- Learning from experience;
- Never thinking that enough has been done to ensure a safe culture.

Related Policies/Documents: Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Equal Opportunities & Inclusion Policy, Employee Handbook