Telford & Wrekin Council

Schools HR Advisory Service

Policy Document for

Newport Infant School and Nursery

Safer Recruitment Policy

Introduced: November 2022

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy provides a consistent approach to recruitment and selection, enabling this us to recruit the right individuals – using the right mechanisms and processes to recruit safely, and at the same time deterring those who may be unsuitable to work with children or young people.

1.2. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care and the School expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

1.3. We will ensure that we meet our commitment to safeguarding by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

2. Scope of policy

2.1. This policy covers recruitment to permanent and temporary roles within this organisation. The safer recruitment principles of the policy should also be applied to the appointment and vetting of volunteers to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

3. Statutory requirements

3.1. We adhere to all statutory requirements as set out in the Keeping Children Safe in Education document – part 3, of which forms the basis of this policy Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK.

3.2. Statutory requirements also fall under sections 175 of the Education Act 2002.

4. Preparing to recruit

4.1. Anyone within Newport Infant School and Nursery involved in the recruitment and selection of staff is responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

4.2. The job description and person specification are essential tools and will be used throughout the recruitment and selection process. These will be reviewed prior to commencing any recruitment activity and specifically in relation to safeguarding, they will include reference to the extent of contact with children, the post holders responsibility for promoting and safeguarding children, and whether the post requires a DBS check and at what level.

4.3. The interview panel will be identified ensuring that at least one member has completed Safer Recruitment Training prior to the commencement of this recruitment activity, although ideally we would like all of the panel to have had some basic safer recruitment training, such as the NSPCC online safer recruitment training. Two people should undertake the shortlisting process, as detailed in KCSIE, 2022.

4.4. Appropriate selection methods will be agreed and will always include an interview.

4.5. The recruitment timetable will also be confirmed to ensure sufficient time is allowed for this process and this incorporates the time required for pre employment checks to be undertaken prior to commencement in post.

5. Advertising

5.1. Any advert will include a statement about our School's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils, and again will make reference to the successful candidate undertaking a DBS check at the appropriate level, if this is a requirement of the role. A link to/a copy of the schools relevant Safeguarding Policies will also be included on the advert, including this Safer Recruitment Policy.

6. The application process

6.1. All applicants will complete the School's standard application form – CV's are not accepted.

6.2. This application form should include the following information;

- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number;
- details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving;
- full employment history, (since leaving school, including education, employment and voluntary work) including reasons for any gaps in employment/education;
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award;
- details of two referees (one referee should be the applicants current or most recent Employer/Line Manager (not a friend) and;
- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.

6.3. The application form/pack will not ask them to declare any cautions and convictions at this stage of the recruitment process but will make it clear they will be required to do so if they are shortlisted.

6.4. The application form/pack will also make it clear that an online check will be undertaken should they be shortlisted.

6.5. All completed application forms will be required to be signed (with a wet signature) and dated by the candidate prior to any conditional offer is made.

7. The shortlisting process

7.1. At least two people from the interview panel will participate in the shortlisting process.

7.2. The criteria to be used in assessing the applications at this stage will be based on the person specification, to ensure consistency for all candidates.

7.3. The shortlisting assessment will be documented to ensure that there is a record should there be a challenge from any candidate. These records, alongwith the application form will be held for a period of 6 months before being destroyed (excluding that for the appointed candidate).

7.4. In addition, applications will be reviewed to ensure there are no discrepancies, to enable identification of any gaps in employment history or education, or repeated changes of employment in short periods of time. For those that are still shortlisted these queries will be documented in preparation for questioning the candidiate at interview.

8. Preparation for Interview

8.1. All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete the self-disclosure form prior to any interview. The purpose of self-declaration is to enable candidates to have the opportunity to share relevant information prior to the interview and allow this to be discussed during the interview. This will not take away the requirement to apply for a DBS check should a conditional offer of employment be made. This form will include questions related to the following;

- Cautions and convictions (where these are not protected offences)
- Whether they are on the Childrens Barred List
- Prohibition from Teaching
- Overseas information
- Childcare Disqualification

8.2. Where a shortlisted candidate discloses something which would make it unlawful for us to employ them the offer of an interview may be withdrawn.

8.3. Online checks

8.3.1. An online check will also be undertaken of all shortlisted candidates prior to interview.

8.3.2. This will be undertaken by a member of staff who is not a member of the interview panel and who will not be an immediate colleague of the candidate.

8.3.3. This will be a check of the full name (including any previous surnames) via an internet search, this will not be a social media search.

8.3.4. Should any concerning information be found via this search the person undertaking the check will share this information with the chair of the interview

panel, only if this is relevant to their suitability to work with with children. They will seek appropriate advice from HR if they unsure before sharing this information with any interview panel member.

8.3.5. A record that this check has been undertaken and any action that was taken as a result will be referenced on the employee file should they be appointed.

8.3.6. This information would be discussed with the candidate at interview and any response recorded as part of the recruitment process.

8.4. References

8.4.1. At least two references will be obtained prior to interview,where authority has been given by the candidate.

8.4.2. One of these references should be from the current or most recent Employer.

8.4.3. References will be requested directly from the referee. We will not accept open references i.e. 'to whom it may concern'.

8.4.4. Standard reference proforma's will be used when requesting references to ensure consistency. This will ask the referee if they are satisfied with the applicant's suitability to work with children and provide facts regarding any substantiated safeguarding allegations.

8.4.5. References will be followed up and verified by the School to ensure they are legitimate and from the said source, usually via a phone call.

8.4.6. References will be scrutinised to ensure the content is accurate (as per the application form) and that there are no anomalies.

8.4.7. Previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies.

8.4.8. Any anomalies or discrepancies will be discussed with the candidate either at interview or prior to any appointment is confirmed.

9. The Selection Process

9.1 We will use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post, but will always include an interview as part of the process.

9.2 Questions will be based on the job description and person specification, and will be structured and agreed in advance prior to the interview.

9.3 The interview panel will identify and agree any issues they wish to explore with the candidates based on their application form, self disclosure form and references.

9.4 Questions will include the following themes:

- What attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children;
- exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role;
- asking for explanations for any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment frequently.

9.5 Candidates will be asked to discuss the content of their self disclosure form if there is any information contained within it. The disclosure of a conviction/offence will not automatically debar a candidate from being appointable.

9.6 All interview notes will be clearly recorded in written format, along with the decisions made. Candidates can subsequently ask for feedback and for a copy of their interview notes. The information for those candidates who are not appointed will be held securely for a period of 6 months before being destroyed.

10 Offer of Employment

10.1 All offers of employment will be made on a conditional 'preferred candidate' basis until the School have completed **all** pre-employment checks.

11 Pre Employment Checks

11.1 The following pre employment checks will be undertaken prior to confirming a final offer of employment;

- Identity Check.
- Two references, including one from their most recent/current employer
- An online check has been undertaken.
- DBS check at the relevant level – in most cases this would be an enhanced DBS including a check on the childrens barred list if the individual is going to be working in regulated activity with children. (see further information below on DBS checks)
- Occupational Health clearance, particulary for those in teaching posts to confirm Fitness to Teach.
- Evidence of the individual's right to work in the UK.
- Verification of professional qualifications to include a check via the DfE Sign in to check QTS status for qualified teachers.
- A section 128 check for the following members of staff, CEO's, Headteachers,Heads of Department and other positions on the Senior Leadership Team (Academies & Free Schools Only delete if not applicable)
- Prohibition checks (for teaching staff and those undertaking teaching work (eg: HLTA's and any support member of staff that holds QTS) – this is a check to ensure no prohibition order has been issued by the Secretary of State (via the Teacher Regulation Agency), or any sanction or restriction has been imposed (that remains current) by the GTCE before it's abolition in March 2012.
- A childcare disqualification check (only applicable for those employed to work with children up to the age of 8 and those who manage this provision).
- Overseas checks – this applies to candidiates who have worked overseas for 12 months or more in the past 10 years and this is there first role in a school in England. They will require a certificate of good conduct from the country/ies they have resided in.

12 DBS Checks

12.1 There are three main types of DBS check that apply to Education settings:

- Standard - provides information about convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings held on the Police National Computer, regardless of whether they are spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders 1974. The law allows for certain old and minor offences to be filtered out;
- Enhanced – same as standard check, plus any approved information held by the police which they feel is relevant and should be disclosed;
- Enhanced with barred list check – where people are working or seeking to work in regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults, this allows an additional check to be made as to whether the person appears on the children's or adult's barred list. This is likely to be required for most appointments in schools and colleges with the Adults barred list also being required to be checked checked for those working with pupils who are vulnerable over the age of 18.

12.2 It is illegal to undertake a barred list check on anyone who is not working in regulated activity and therefore we will only check potential staff on the barred list if the definition of regulated activity is met as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. For Volunteers we will undertake a risk assessment to determine the level of check that would be appropriate depending on the activity they would be undertaking and whether or not they would be supervised.

12.3 We do not currently expect our staff to register with the DBS update service, however we will accept checks via the update service for potential new staff with their consent. We will need to see a copy of the original DBS certificate before we can process this check via the Update service [or alternative paragraph - we do not accept DBS checks via the DBS Update Service].

12.4 A paper copy of the DBS certificate will need to be seen by us before any final offer of employment can be made. Where a candidate is currently working for a school within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin Council and the Council have a record of this DBS check a new check will not be required, however the disclosure certificate will need to be seen by us before confirming the offer of employment.

12.5 The governors at Newport Infant School and Nursery have decided that we will renew DBS checks every 10 years or as the budget will allow. However we do recognise that we have suitable provisions in place to ensure that information that could/would be included on the DBS certificate is provided to us; either via a self disclosure by the employee (this is a contractual requirement) and/or reported to us by third party agencies such as the Police/Safeguarding Services.

12.6 When employees move to other roles within the organisation we will assess whether the DBS requirements have changed and undertake a new DBS check if required.

For example, they move from a post which was not classified as regulated activity to one that is.

13. Dealing with convictions

13.1 We have a formal vetting process for dealing with matters that are outlined on the DBS certificate. Depending on the severity of this information an initial assessment will be made to determine whether or not they are low, medium or high risk and whether the case needs to be considered at a vetting panel as set out below:

- Potentially Moderate/High Risk
  - any form of violence,
  - any sexual offence,
  - use or possession of drugs or
  - any other offence involving children or vulnerable people
- Low Risk
  - petty theft,
  - motor vehicle/driving offences or
  - other low level crime

13.2 A risk assessment will be completed. Where the assessment determines the matters are low risk this will be signed off by the Headteacher.

13.3 Where the risk is Moderate to High a Vetting Panel will be convened. Documentation will be provided by us to the panel. The panel will be chaired by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Telford & Wrekin Council and an HR representative from Telford & Wrekin Council Local Authority (for all maintained schools, and those that contract HR services from Telford & Wrekin Council). The Headteacher may also attend the this Vetting panel.

13.4 The Vetting Panel will make a recommendation on whether to proceed with this appointment and whether any particulary safeguards should be considered as part of this employment. We will comply with the recommendations made by the LADO.

14.Pre DBS Risk Assessments

14.1 No individuals will commence employment until **all** pre-employment checks are received and are deemed satisfactory. However if all satisfactory checks have been received and the only outstanding check is the DBS then the individual may start subject to the completion of a Pre DBS risk assessment.

14.2 These risk assessments can only be undertaken where the following apply;

- a check has been made on the children's barred list via the DfE Sign In Portal
- they have had a previous enhanced DBS (including children's barred list check) undertaken by their current employer employer and this is from their current address, they have produced an original copy of the disclosure certificate and it is clear

- all other pre-employment checks have been undertaken and are satisfactory.
- there are no unexplained ‘gaps’ in employment
- Suitable measures such as supervision can be introduced whilst the DBS is awaited

14.3 A pre DBS risk assessment form will be completed and signed by the Headteacher which will give the candidate persmission to work within the school whilst the DBS is awaited, subject to any specific safeguards as outlined on the form. A member of the HR Department at Telford & Wrekin Council will also sign this form.

15.Single Central Record

15.1 We maintain a single central record of all pre-employment checks for **all** staff including teacher trainees on salaried routes, agency staff, tutors and third party supply staff as well as Governors.

15.2 This will be audited on a termly basis by the Governor/Trustee responsible for Safeguarding.

16.Induction

16.1 All staff who are new to this organisation will receive induction training that will cover safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices as well as the Employee Code of Conduct. They will also be required to read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.