Hope View School

Safer Recruitment & Induction Policy

This policy links to the safeguarding policy and procedures Policy Statement 'This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment'.

This policy will be applied in relation to everyone who works with children in the school who are under 18 years of age who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult.

The policy statement will be included in:

- Publicity materials
- Recruitment websites
- Advertisements
- Candidate information packs
- Person specifications
- Job descriptions
- Competency frameworks
- Induction training

Planning and Advertising

It will be made clear the mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate, and any particular matters will be mentioned in the advertisement for the post in order to prevent unwanted applications. The recruitment exercise itself will identify who should be involved, assign responsibilities and set aside sufficient time for the work needed at each stage to be completed. The selection process will be organised to allow references to be obtained on shortlisted candidates before interview. Material that will form part of the pack to be sent to prospective applicants e.g. the application form, job description, and information/guidance for applicants will be up-to date, and clearly set out the extent of the relationships/contact with children and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have in the position to be filled. (N.B. all work in a school or similar setting involves some degree of responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post.) When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement will include a statement about the employer's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and reference to

the need for the successful applicant to undertake a criminal record check via the DBS, where appropriate, as well as the usual details of the post and salary, qualifications required, etc.

Application Form

An application form will be used to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants. For applicants for all types of post the form will contain:

• full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address, and National Insurance number;

• a statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the position for which s/he is applying with details of the awarding body and date of award;

• a full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training, and part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training, and reasons for leaving employment.

• a declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers (including councillors and governors)

• details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer, and normally two referees should be sufficient. N.B. where an applicant who is not currently working with children has done so in the past it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children. The form should make it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.

• a statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification.

It will include an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore that all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as 'spent', must be declared, and it should require a signed statement that the person is not disqualified from work with children, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, e.g. the Teaching Council, and either has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, or has attached details of their record in a sealed envelope marked 'confidential'.

It will record that:

• where appropriate the successful applicant will be required to provide a Disclosure from the DBS at the appropriate level for the post;

• the prospective employer will seek references on shortlisted candidates, and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, before interview;

• if the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis, his/her current employer with children will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children, including any in which the penalty is "time expired" (that is where a warning could no longer be taken into account in any new disciplinary hearing for example) and whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns, and if so, the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. If the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues.

• providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, and possible referral to the police.

Applicants for teaching posts will also be asked:

• to provide their DfE reference number;

• whether s/he has Qualified Teacher status (QTS); and,

Explanatory notes and/or instructions for completing the form should be included in the candidate's information pack.

Job Description

This will clearly state:

• the main duties and responsibilities of the post

• the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons s/he is responsible for, or comes into contact with.

Person Specification

This will:

• include the qualifications and experience, and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people;

• the competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate; and,

• explain how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

Information pack to candidates

The pack will include a copy of:

• the application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form;

• the job description, and person specification;

• Information for applicants Scrutinising and Short Listing

All applications will be scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed; that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant. As well as reasons for obvious gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work will need to be explored and verified.

All candidates will be assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

Shortlisting

Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people and will:

- Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
- Explore all potential concerns

Once we have shortlisted candidates, we will ask shortlisted candidates to:

- Complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we will ask for includes:
- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the barred list
- Whether they are prohibited from teaching
- Information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
- Any relevant overseas information
- Sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true

We will also consider carrying out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online.

References

These will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. “To Whom It May Concern” will not be relied upon. References will be sought on all short listed candidates, including internal ones, and will be obtained before interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview. In exceptional circumstances it might not be possible to obtain references prior to interview, either because of delay on the part of the referee, or because a candidate strongly objects to their current employer being approached at that stage, but that will be the aim in all cases. It is up to the person conducting the recruitment to decide whether to accede to a candidate’s request to approach his/her

current employer only if s/he is the preferred candidate after the interview, but it is not recommended as good practice. In any case where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred candidate before interview, the prospective employer must ensure that it is received and scrutinised, and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before the person's appointment is confirmed. All requests for references will seek objective verifiable information and not subjective opinion.

A copy of the job description and person specification for the post for which the person is applying will be included with all requests, and every request will ask:

• about the referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship: if so what; how long has the referee known the candidate, and in what capacity;

• whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question, and for specific comments about the applicant's suitability for the post, and how s/he has demonstrated that s/he meets the person specification;

• whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and, if not, for specific details of the referee's concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the person might be unsuitable; and will remind the referee that:

• they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission; and

• relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.

In addition to the above, requests addressed to a candidate's current employer, or a previous, employer in work with children, will also seek:

• confirmation of details of the applicant's current post and salary;

• specific verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct;

• details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to in which the disciplinary sanction is current;

• details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children or young people, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired, and the outcome of those; and,

• details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people, and the outcome of those concerns e.g. whether the allegations or concern was investigated, the conclusion reached, and how the matter was resolved.

On receipt references will be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. If all questions have not been answered or the reference is vague or unspecific, the referee should be telephoned and asked to provide written answers or amplification as appropriate.

The information given should also be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and his/her previous employment by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the applicant on the form. Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the applicant.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

Other checks before interview

If a short listed applicant claims to have some specific qualification or previous experience that is particularly relevant to the post for which s/he is applying that will not be verified by a reference, it is good practice to verify the facts before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview. The qualification or experience can usually be verified quickly by telephoning the relevant previous employer and asking for written confirmation of the facts.

Interviews

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements, and explore their suitability to work with children. The selection process for people who will work with children should always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate.

Invitation to Interview

In addition to the arrangements for interviews - time and place, membership of the interview panel - the invitation will remind candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children. Enclosing a copy of the person specification can usefully draw attention to the relevant information.

Interview Panel

Although it is possible for interviews to be conducted by a single person it is not recommended. It is better to have a minimum of two interviewers, and in some cases, e.g. for senior or specialist posts, a larger panel might be appropriate. A panel of at least two people allows one member to observe and assess the candidate, and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview.

The members of the panel will:

• have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment;

• be appropriately trained, one member of interview panels in schools should have undertaken the safer recruitment training (online training is being provided via the NSPCC). The Headteacher and Safeguarding Quality Assurance Lead hold the safer recruitment accreditation.

• meet before the interviews to:

• reach a consensus about the required standard for the job to which they are appointing;

• consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and who on the panel will ask about each of those;

• agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification.

The panel cannot agree in advance a list of questions for each candidate that they will not deviate from, but they can agree a set of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post, and the issues they will explore with each candidate based on the information provided in the candidate's application and references (if available). A candidate's response to a question about an issue will determine whether and how that is followed up. Where possible it is best to avoid hypothetical questions because they allow theoretical answers. It is better to ask competence based questions that ask a candidate to relate how s/he has responded to, or dealt with, an actual situation, or questions that test a candidate's attitudes and understanding of issues.

Scope of the Interview

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel will also explore:

• the candidate's attitude toward children and young people;

• his/her ability to support the authority/schools' agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;

• gaps in the candidate's employment history;

• concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee; and,

• ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS check.

If, for whatever reason, references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate should also be asked at interview if there is anything s/he wishes to declare/discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to his/her referees. (And it is vital that the references are obtained and scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed and before s/he starts work.)

Conditional offer of Appointment:

Pre Appointment Checks

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon:

• the receipt of at least two satisfactory references

• verification of the candidate's identity (if that could not be verified straight after the interview)

• a satisfactory DBS Disclosure.

• verification of the candidate's medical fitness

• verification of qualifications (if not verified after the interview);

• verification of professional status where required e.g. National College for Teaching and Leadership, QTS status (unless properly exempted), NPQH; • (for teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999); and,

• (for non-teaching posts) satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

The school will seek advice from its HR services provider, and follow relevant DBS guidance if a Disclosure reveals information that a candidate has not disclosed in course of the selection process.

All checks will be:

• confirmed in writing;

• documented and retained on the personnel file (subject to certain restrictions on the retention of information imposed by DBS regulations); and,

• followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

Where:

• the DBS Disclosure shows s/he has been disqualified from working with children by a Court; or,

• an applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his/her application; or,

• there are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children,

• the facts should be reported to the police and/or the DfE Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit (formerly the Teachers Misconduct Team) .

Checks on Overseas Staff DBS checks should be completed on staff from overseas.

All checks as described above should always be completed regardless of whether the applicant is from overseas. In all cases where an applicant has worked or been resident overseas in the previous 5 years, the employer should where possible obtain a check of the applicant's criminal record from the relevant authority in that country. Not all countries provide that service, but the DBS provides an Overseas Information Service. In cases where a criminal record check is not possible, particular care should be taken with the other required checks, especially those of identity and qualifications, and to obtain satisfactory references.

Post Appointment Induction

There will be an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed, including teaching staff, regardless of previous experience.

The purpose of induction is to:

• provide training and information about the establishment's policies and procedures;

• support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged;

• confirm the conduct expected of staff within the school; and,

• provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and,

• enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

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

• policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, anti-bullying, internet safety and any local child protection/safeguarding procedures;

• safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils in the school;

• how and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and,

• other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistle-blowing.

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

Regular meetings will be held during the first 3 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s) to review progress and to offer support.

New staff will be provided with Hope View School's positive handling policy and offered guidance where this is concerned until full training by Team Teach has taken place.

Equal Opportunities

Hope View School supports the ethos that all persons who apply for a post at the school are treated equally regardless of gender, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation or physical disability.

Single Central Register

The school holds a single central register which details information relating to all members of staff including, disclosure numbers, dates of DBS checks, evidence of identification and evidence of professional qualifications. The Headteacher holds responsibility for the updating of this register.

Links with other school policies and practices

This policy links with a number of other school policies including:

Confidentiality Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Child Protection Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Responsible Person: Mrs C Lorne - Proprietor

Policy review date: July 2023