

Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust



Safer Recruitment Policy

July 2021

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Safer Recruitment Policy for Schools

Date: July 2021

Document summary

This policy sets out the process to enable this school to ensure the safe recruitment of staff in schools as the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Enquiries

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About this document:

<p>Enquiries: HR Advisory Team Author: Personnel and Training Telephone: 01273 481300 Email: janet.bowen@eastsussex.gov.uk</p>	<p>Version number: 01</p> <p>Related information:</p> <p>Recruitment and Selection Policy Promoting Diversity and Equality of Opportunity in Employment Policy DBS Policy Reference Policy On-line resources Intranet and Webshop Recruitment and Selection Toolkit Recruitment and Selection e-learning course Equality and diversity e-learning course Employing Temporary Staff Single Central Record template Guidance on the Single Central Record Guidance on Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006</p> <p>DfE – Statutory Guidance Documents</p> <p>Keeping Children Safe In Education September 2020 Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 and 2018 Regulations School Staffing Regulations 2009 Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools – May 2018 Governor’s Handbook – Section 6.5 Staffing and Performance Management – January 2017 Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018</p> <p>Download these documents From the resources section of the Services to Schools Webshop and/or the DfE website</p>
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Safer recruitment policy for schools

The Governing Body of Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust adopted this policy on 8th July 2021

Key points

- The recruitment process should be fair, open and transparent.
- The Safer Recruitment Policy should be read and implemented alongside the Federation Recruitment and Induction Policy.
- The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to the safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy should be used for any appointment requiring a selection procedure. For exemptions from the selection procedure, see Section 6 below.

2. Principles

- 2.1. The Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.
- 2.2. All posts within the Academy Trust schools are exempt for the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as spent and complete an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- 2.3. The schools will ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have received accredited safer recruitment training.
- 2.4. The school will ensure that every appointment panel includes one member who has received accredited safer recruitment training.
- 2.5. The school will implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role.
- 2.6. The school will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DfE (Statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education) requirements.
- 2.7. The school will ensure the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this policy. The school will monitor compliance with these measures.
- 2.8. Staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment are required to notify the school in writing, including both the offence and the penalty.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1. It is the responsibility of the board of directors to:
 - Ensure the Trust has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DfE guidance and legal requirements.
 - Monitor the Trusts compliance with them.
- 3.2. It is the responsibility of the Executive Headteacher and other senior managers involved in the recruitment process to:
 - Ensure that the Trust operates safer recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the schools
 - Monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document.
 - Promote safeguarding of children and young people at every stage of the recruitment process.
- 3.3. It is the responsibility of all existing workers, including volunteers to comply with the terms of this policy.
- 3.4. It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safer recruitment pre-employment checks.

- 3.5. It is the responsibility of the Employee Services Team for East Sussex County Council to administer the disclosure system using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for the Trust schools who have purchased the Council's services.
- 3.6. In accordance with the School Staffing Regulations, the governing board has delegated responsibility to the Executive Headteacher to lead in all appointments other than that for Executive Headteacher. For appointments within the Federation Senior Leadership group, Directors will participate in the process..
- 3.7. School governors may be involved in staff appointments , but the final decision will rest with the Executive Headteacher. The Executive Headteacher may delegate the selection process of staff outside of the leadership group to other managers in the school, but it is the Executive Headteacher who remains responsible for the final decision to appoint.
- 3.8. For the Executive HeadTeacher post, the responsibility for recruitment and selection is delegated to an appointment panel of nominated governors. They are required to shortlist and interview candidates and make a recommendation to the full Board of Trustees who make the final appointment decision. The Directors may choose to employ the services of an external advisor to support them in this process.
- 3.9. It is the responsibility of all staff to read and understand Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018 (KCSiE 2020), and to sign to this effect: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- 3.10. This record is then retained for inspection purposes and as part of the Safeguarding Checklist for Governors. In addition, if a school leader and/or a member of staff works directly with children, they should also read Part 1 and Annex A of KCSiE).

4. The recruitment and selection process

- 4.1. . Recruiting managers are required to have an understanding of their role and responsibilities in each stage. A [Recruitment and Selection Toolkit](#) is available on the Webshop for use in Schools. Currently the Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust purchase this service so have access to this toolkit.
- 4.2. Recruiting managers in schools need to be aware of the following information in relation to managing the recruitment and selection process in schools, these documents are available from the DfE website:
 - The Governors Handbook – Section 6.5 – Staffing and Performance Management: : https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/582868/Governance_Handbook_-_January_2017.pdf
 - The School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2009/2680/made>
 - Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools – May 2018 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/710888/Staffing_and_employment_advice_for_schools-18.pdf

5. Advertising

- 5.1. To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, normally this will entail an external advertisement. However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate.
- 5.2. All external advertisements will contain the school's safeguarding statement.

6. Application forms

- 6.1. The Academy Trust uses the Council's standard application form for teaching and/or support staff vacancies, adapted for the needs of the academy trust. CV's will not be accepted. The school requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at interview and further information may be requested from candidates.
- 6.2. Applicants should be aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the application has been *selected*, and where appropriate a referral to the police and other professional bodies.

7. Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants

- 7.1. Applicants for all post (including volunteers) are required to declare all criminal convictions whether "spent" or "unspent" and include any cautions and pending prosecution.
- 7.2. Such declarations will be made on the appropriate section of the application form.. The chair of the panel/Executive Headteacher will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at interview
- 7.3. The disclosure of convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

8. Interviews

- 8.1. The selection process will always include a face to face interview with at least one selection panel which will include questions relating to safeguarding children (in line with Safer Recruitment Training). Face to face includes via video link if circumstances require this.
- 8.2. For some vacancies, it may be appropriate for the selection process to include a panel of young people of an appropriate activity with pupils.

9. Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK, and Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status

- 9.1. Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents on the day of interview in line with those set out in The Immigration, Asylum and National Act 2006. Similar information is also required to undertake a DBS check on the preferred candidate.

- 9.2. Shortlisted candidates will also be required to provide original proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation on the day of the interview. The school will verify that candidates have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate. If the original documents are not available, the school will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where candidates have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check by UK NARIC will also be required. UK NARIC is the UK's National Agency responsible for providing information and opinion on academic, vocational and professional qualifications from across the world:
<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/individuals/compare%20qualifications/default.aspx>
- 9.3. Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the Director of Finance and Resources or Assistant Director Of Finance and Resources.

10. Commencement of employment prior to DBS check being received

- 10.1. In exceptional circumstances it is permitted to commence employment prior to receiving a DBS check. However a Barred List check and risk assessment must be carried out by the Director or Assistant Director of Finance and Resources and Executive Headteacher or Head of School. The risk assessment should include that the employee must not be unsupervised or left alone with pupils until a DBS check has been received and the decision is taken that the DBS check meets the requirements of the post.

11. Employment offer

- 11.1. When the offer of employment is made (verbally and in writing) this should only be made subject to the successful completion of all pre-employment checks.
- 11.2. It may be possible to agree a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of DBS disclosures, all pre-employment checks (see below) must be completed **before** a person's appointment is confirmed. In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment. All employees and volunteers working in a relevant setting (see the Disqualification under the Childcare Act Policy) are required to complete a Childcare Disqualification Self -Declaration Form a Statutory guidance published by DfE provides further information:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006>

11.3. Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued in accordance with employment legislation.

12. References

12.1. It is the decision of the school if they wish to take up references on all shortlisted candidates immediately after shortlisting. At the Torfield and Saxon Mount Academy Trust schools references will be requested immediately after shortlisting. References are part of the pre-employment checks and should be requested immediately an offer of employment has been made if they have not already been received (subject to 11.2 above). Any discrepancies in a reference should be discussed with the referee, and where appropriate, the offer of employment may be withdrawn. See the Council's Reference Policy for further information.

12.2. Where an employee has indicated on the application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted prior to interview, in such cases, the reference will be taken up immediately after interview and prior to any offer of employment being substantiated.

12.3. References must be in writing and on school or business letterhead, and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied – open reference or testimonials are not acceptable. The school will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity of a friend. Wherever possible, only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable. Reference requests may specifically ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate.
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concern and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.

12.4. Referees will also be asked to confirm:

- The applicant's current post and salary
- Performance history and conduct including details on any situation where any formal action has been taken using capability procedures within the last 2 years.
- Any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current.
- Any disciplinary procedures involving issues relating to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired and the outcome of those.

12.5. KCSIE provides further statutory guidance employment history and references (paragraphs – 139 – 142)

12.6. References will be compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant.

13. Pre-employment checks

13.1. The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one of which will be from the current, former or most recent employer, as described above.

- Verification of the candidate's identity in line with the requirements of The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2000.
- Verification of right to work in the UK (see the GOV.UK website for more information)
- A satisfactory enhanced DBS clearance with a barred list information check where the person will be engaging in regulated activity.
- A health assessment questionnaire completed by the prospective employee and where necessary and occupational health review carried out by the Council's Occupational Health provider.
- Verification of (professional) qualifications as appropriate.
- Verifications of qualified teacher status, successful completion of induction year and confirmation that the teacher is not subject to any prohibition orders (all accessed from the school via the DfE Employer Access or Teacher Services online check) as required by law for teachers – see : <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teacher-status-checks-information-for-employers>
- A check for a section 128 direction (for management positions in independent schools including academies and free schools) please see the link above to undertake this check.

14. Record retention and data protection

- 14.1. The Trust will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6 month period, after which time notes for unsuccessful candidates will confidentially destroyed (shredded). The 6 month retention period will allow the school to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or to respond to any complaints made to the Employment Tribunal. For successful candidates, interview notes will normally be held as part of their personnel file, as described on the Trusts HR retention schedule.
- 14.2. Under data protection law, applicants have a right to request access to notes written about them during a recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a written subject access request in writing to the school at any point while the record is still held by the school.
- 14.3. In gathering information to make recruitment decisions schools must ensure that they act proportionately and minimise wherever possible the intrusion into the private lives of their staff. Accordingly schools must ensure that they handle information fairly and lawfully and take care not to breach:
- The Data Protection Act
 - The General Data Protection Regulations
 - The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013) (“the Exceptions Order”)
 - The Human Rights Act 1988.

15. Personnel file records

- 15.1. The school will normally retain the following information which will make up part of the personnel file, for the successful candidate, in line with the Trusts HR retention schedule:

- Application form
- References
- Disclosure of convictions form
- Proof of identification
- Eligibility to work in the UK, (see the GOV.UK website for more information)
- Evidence of qualifications
- Evidence that the Employer Access online checks have been made – teaching qualification, successful completion of induction year and no prohibition orders in place (and section 128 checks for academies).
- Proof of professional qualifications (e.g. QTS, NPQH etc.).
- Evidence of health assessment from the provider of occupational health services to the school
- Evidence of the DBS clearance the actual DBS form or certificate should not be retained.
- Certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable to DBS checks).
- Copy of any risk assessment for any positive disclosure made
- Copy of self-declaration form – Disqualification under the Childcare Act (for relevant positions).
- Section 128 checks for school leaders and Governors

16. Single Central Record of Barring and Recruitment Pre-employment checks

- 16.1. In line with DfE requirements, the Trust schools will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and pre-employment checks. The central list will record all staff who are employed at the school including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, governors, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g. peripatetic music teachers, sports coach or artist etc.
- 16.2. The single central record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:
- Identity checks
 - Qualification checks for any qualification legally required for the job (e.g. QTS)
 - Prohibition from teaching checks
 - Barred list checks
 - DBS enhanced disclosure
 - Further overseas checks where appropriate
 - Disqualification under the childcare act
 - Section 128 checks
- 16.3. The single central record will also indicate who undertook the check and the date on which the check was completed or the relevant certificate obtained.

- 16.4. In order to record supply provided through an agency on the record, the school will require written confirmation for the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed the checks described above. The school does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure. However, identity checks must be carried out by the school to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them.
- 16.5. School management staff will be given a copy of the DfE guidance on Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2> and asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the document and will follow the guidelines required to maintain professional boundaries at all times.

17. Whistleblowing

- 17.1. All staff in the Trust schools are subject to the Trusts Whistleblowing Policy – Raising Concerns.

18. Safeguarding culture and vigilance

- 18.1. The Trust adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously.

19. Allegations

- 19.1. The Trust will follow DfE and East Sussex County Council Safeguarding Children Board allegations procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

20. Section 128 checks for Governors

- 20.1. Governors are only required to have an Enhanced DBS Check without the barred list check (unless in addition to their governance duties they also engage in regulated activity). It is the responsibility of the governing body to apply for a certificate for any of their members who do not already have one.
- 20.2. A section 128 direction will also be disclosed where an enhanced DBS check with barred list information is requested, provided that 'children's workforce independent schools' is specified in the parameters for the barred list check. (Para 131 KCSIE)
- 20.3. A section 128 direction disqualifies a person from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor. (Para 128 KCSIE)
- 20.4. This school undertakes DBS checks for governors and has undertaken retrospective section 128 checks for all existing governors. Section 128 checks will be undertaken for all prospective governors as part of the application process for joining the governing body.