



Hope Tree School

Where difference is valued

Safer Recruitment Policy 2024

Introduction:

The following guidelines have been drawn up to represent the good practice to be followed during the recruitment and selection process. The guidelines take account of equality of opportunity, relevant employment and safe recruiting legislation.

This policy is written in line with part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021.

It is recognised that the requirements for each post may vary and therefore these guidelines allow for flexibility with the process but establish a set of principles within which the process should operate.

Aims:

- to recruit and select the best people available to join the workforce
- to take all reasonable steps to prevent unsuitable people from joining the school
- to recruit, select and manage all staff in a way that complies with legislation designed to combat inequality and discrimination
- to do all we can to achieve and maintain a diverse workforce
- to ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are consistent and transparent
- to ensure candidates are judged to be competent before we make them an offer of a job
- to ensure that new members of staff are given a proper induction.

We recognise that:

- our workforce is our most important resource
- unsuitable individuals sometimes seek out opportunities via employment or volunteering to have contact with children in order to harm them
- some groups face unfair discrimination in the workplace
- children, young people and families benefit from our efforts to recruit and select a skilled and committed workforce from a diverse range of backgrounds
- new staff and volunteers cannot perform their role effectively unless they are inducted properly and receive ongoing support and supervision.

Processes for recruitment and induction:

- advertising posts through appropriate media and in a way that ensures that we attract high quality applicants from diverse backgrounds
- providing an application pack with relevant information for anybody who expresses an interest in an advertised job
- ensuring that all applications for both paid and volunteer positions are made using a standard application form
- involving more than one person to shortlist applicants for interview
- having at least two people conducting a face-to-face interview
- incorporating the views and perspectives of students and staff into the recruitment and selection process whenever appropriate
- obtaining a minimum of two references, three pieces of identification and original copies of any necessary qualifications from candidates
- requiring that all staff and volunteers have an up-to-date relevant DBS check where their post is eligible for this (including a check against the barred list if the post involves regulated activity)
- providing an appropriate induction for all new staff and volunteers
- ensuring that all staff are made aware, during their induction period, of how to keep children and young people safe in our school
- appointing all staff and volunteers on a probationary period initially, with a review before they are confirmed in post
- using the list of processes below to follow a consistent procedure for recruitment, selection and induction

When a vacancy arises:

As soon as a post becomes vacant either through resignation or expansion, the Head of Learning will consider the skills and experience of existing staff within the team and decide if the vacancy should go to an external advert.

Important aspects for consideration:

Timescale:

- The date the new member of staff will be required from
- Lead times for advertisements
- Reasonable period before the closing date
- Requirements for shortlisting
- Notification to candidates of interview dates and arrangements
- Opportunity to obtain written references.

Selection Panel:

- Head of Learning
- Head of Pastoral Care

At least one member of each panel will be required to have adequate training in Safer Recruitment.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

The description of duties of the post should be drawn up by the appropriate line manager in conjunction with members of the selection panel.

The job description should set out the main duties and responsibilities of the post and be an accurate reflection of what will be required in that post.

The job description should be written in a way that it is easily understood, be free of jargon and non-discriminatory.

The person specification should be drawn up to be distributed to potential candidates. It will be used as a basis for shortlisting and selecting candidates.

- Essential criteria are those that a candidate must have to undertake the duties of a post.
- Desirable criteria are those which would help but which are not essential.

A candidate selected for interview must have all of the essential criteria as set out in the person specification.

Advertising:

Most vacancies will be advertised on the following sites:

- TES newspaper and TES online
- School website
- Facebook Page

Some vacancies may be advertised internally e.g. for promoted posts.

Some advertisements may be placed with Recruitment Agencies who may have a stock of suitably qualified applicants on file.

On request for details, all applicants will be sent (either by post or email) an information pack which includes an application form, job and person specifications and the school information.

A copy of the school Safeguarding policy will be sent to the applicant to ensure all applicants understand the school's commitment to safeguarding.

Applicants are asked to bring with them proof of qualifications relevant to their post, two forms of photo ID and proof of address for checking and single central register purposes.

All adverts will send out a clear message that we are a safer recruitment establishment and are committed to the safeguarding of children and young people and that all posts will be subject to Enhanced DBS Security Checks.

All staff working with our students have enhanced DBS. This includes volunteers.

Each application form has a section for self-disclosure which must be signed by the candidate either when they submit their application or at the interview.

Selection for Interview:

All applications should be considered against the criteria outlined in the person specification.

All applicants must complete the application form, which includes a personal statement.

Shortlisting decisions should be based on the information contained within the application.

When shortlisting the following things should be considered:

- Have all sections of the application been filled out?
- Are there any gaps in employment history?
- Are there any queries about qualifications?
- If references are sought beforehand are these consistent with the information on the application form?
- Has the applicant worked abroad and are referees available?

Shortlisting may be affected by the location of the candidate and their availability for interview e.g. if they are overseas.

All applicants should be informed whether they have been successful for interview or not.

Any invitation to interview should include the following information:

- Details of date, time and venue
- A programme of the interview day (which may include a range of activities)
- Information candidates need to bring with them
- Notification of any tasks i.e. for presentations, demonstration lessons, etc

Interviews:

- The areas of questioning will be agreed by the panel in advance.
- The same set of questions will be used for each candidate to ensure equality and give a consistent framework.
- Questions about safeguarding and the vulnerability of our students are asked to every candidate and an in depth discussion is held about their views to ensure these are compatible with the school and address issues in Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2018.
- Questions should be behaviour and competency based in order to gain insight into candidates' motivation for working with children; emotional maturity and resilience; values and ethics.
- Time must be set aside during the interview to explore any areas for discussion from the application form and to clarify any misunderstandings and gaps in employment.
- Interview questions will be scored against each other to ensure a fair outcome.
- Most roles will require additional tasks such as presentations, teaching exercises or written tasks that are appropriate for the role.

All application forms ask candidates for consent to seek references before interview.

If for any reason this is not possible, the candidate may have a follow up discussion or interview to discuss the content of references post interview.

Decisions:

There is a consistent scoring system used across the school for all roles. This enables the selection process to identify the most successful candidate.

Panel members should record their assessments of each candidate - these records are kept for feedback purposes only.

The candidates will have been told when to expect a decision to be made and arrangements made to inform them of the outcome. Every effort should be made to stick to the timings given.

The successful candidate will be informed first, usually by the Head of Learning, and informally offered a conditional offer of the position. At that time salary and terms and conditions may be discussed.

All posts are offered subject to satisfactory references and a clear DBS.

If the candidate informally accepts then the recruitment process continues. If not then the next suitable candidate may be offered the position.

Unsuccessful candidates are informed of the outcome and feedback may be offered.

References:

A letter and an accompanying proforma will be sent to all named referees on the candidates application form.

References should be from the most recent employer. All references will be scrutinised and cross-checked with the information on the candidates application form.

If there are any areas on the reference that need clarification the referee will be contacted to seek more information, all references are verified by a follow up phone call to confirm the referees details and position/title.

Open, standard or verbal references (as an only source) will not be accepted; at the very least, a member of the panel will contact the referee to require further details.

Any doubts or inconsistencies will be explored further with the referee and clarified.

References will only be accepted if they are on the school proforma document.

Notes are taken by the call placer in regards to verbal references, these are forwarded to the Head of Learning for review.

All references are reviewed by the Head of Learning and signed to confirm that they have been read.

Pre-appointment checks:

Before any confirmation of offer or acceptance takes place the following pre-appointment checks must take place, these must include:

- scrutiny of references
- identity checked
- qualifications checked relevant to job
- eligibility to work in the UK
- health and sickness / absence record checked
- DBS
- prohibition orders
- barred from management (where applicable)
- verification of professional registration

These checks will be made clear to the candidate at interview. Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory checks being received and verified.

When the interview panel have decided who they would like to appoint to the post the successful candidate will be notified and sent a pack of documentation which they should complete and return promptly to allow any remaining pre-employment checks to take place.

Before the conditional offer can be secured all of the above checks must have been carried out and satisfied. The conditional offer still remains until all the safeguarding checks have been completed.

Following the pre-appointment checks and conditional confirmation of the job offer the following process should be followed:

- Offer letter sent out
- DBS checks applied for (and completed if possible)
- Bank details confirmed for payroll
- Pension information given
- Emergency contact details completed
- Handbook and Staff Information sent
- Information about access to online induction training

Induction

A full two week induction programme is scheduled, which assists new staff to settle into and learn all aspects of their role. This includes Safeguard Training and procedure, Health & Safety Guidance, IT guidance including use of the software programmes and the school utilities.

Agency Staff

All agency staff must bring proof of ID on their first day at the school, if this does not happen they will not be permitted to work with the students.

Agencies are required to provide written confirmation of the staff member's suitability to work with children which must include safeguarding checks in line with school policy.

Any agency staff who wishes or is required to work for a longer period of time or applies for a full time position at the school will be treated in the same way as external applicants and will go through the same recruitment process.

Long term supply staff will also access the induction process in the same way a permanently employed staff do.

Volunteers and Work Experience:

All volunteers or work experience applicants must bring ID with them on their first day at the school, again if this does not happen they will not be permitted to work with the students.

School/college placed work experience applicants must provide a reference from their school or college which will be verified in the same way as permanent staff applications.

A Health and Safety induction will take place with volunteers and work experience candidates and all are expected to sign to confirm that they have received, read and understood the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and the relevant section of KCSIE, 2021.

DBS and references will be sourced in the same way as permanent staff.

All volunteers, work experience or temporary staff are supervised at all times.

Contractors:

Hope Tree School requests that contractors work outside of school hours as much as reasonably possible, to avoid disruption to the students' learning.

Where this is not possible, contractors are requested to provide ID, a DBS Certificate Number (if applicable) and to complete a contractors questionnaire, which is held by the school admin.

Contractors are supervised at all times if they are required to work inside the school during school hours.

It is the Head of Learning's responsibility to ensure the above paperwork and procedure is followed.

Single Central Register

The school keeps a central record of all staff that provides confirmation that the following checks have taken place:

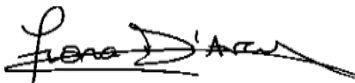
- Verification of identity (Name, DoB, Address, Photo)
- Qualifications (Qualifications required to do the job and any professional registrations required e.g QTS)
- Disclosure and Barring Service check (including Children's Barred List check)
- Barred from Management Checks
- Employer Access Online (List of persons barred from Teaching)
- Overseas Criminal Record Checks (applicable for any employee who has spent a period of time living abroad)
- Professional References
- Right to Work in the UK
- Medical Questionnaire completed

This record will be maintained by the Head of Learning.

Signed:



Head of Learning



Head of Pastoral Care

Date: March 2024

Review Date: March 2025