



**Safer recruitment and selection policy and procedure**  
(reviewed March 2017 and updated June 2019 – next review March 2020)

## **1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1 WHST recognises its staff as being fundamental to its success. A strategic and professional approach to recruitment processes enable the Trust to attract and appoint staff with the right skills and attributes to fulfil the strategic aim of improving the current and future lives of local children and families and ranking amongst the highest performing primary schools nationally and in Hertfordshire.
- 1.2 WHST is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, and effective and promotes recruitment of the highest quality staff as well as promoting equality of opportunity and robust safeguarding standards.
- 1.3 Recruitment should be treated as a key public relations exercise as the way it is managed affects the image of the school, and consequently the ability to attract and appoint high calibre staff.
- 1.4 This policy has been designed to provide a flexible framework which promotes good practice and supports fully the core business of WHST.
- 1.5 Guidelines which form the basis for the implementation of this policy are also provided. They have been designed to maximise flexibility to meet the needs of posts and ensure that the Trust complies with relevant legislation.
- 1.6 Professional advice and support is available at all stages of the recruitment process from the School Business Manager, Trust Business Manager and HR support.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff to the Trust and its schools.
- 2.2 All employees, trustees and governors involved at any stage of the recruitment and selection of staff should be aware of and adhere to the contents of this policy.

## **3. Aims**

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to ensure that recruitment processes are robust, fit for purpose and can stand up to scrutiny;
- to attract the best possible applicants to vacancies;
- deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young people;
- identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable for work with children and young people;
- to appoint the best person for each position;



- to ensure compliance with relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010, Data Protection Act 1998 and UK Immigration legislation;
- to promote the values of the Trust and the schools;
- to meet the operational requirements of the schools and the strategic aims of the Trust;
- to safeguard the children in the Trust schools.

#### **4. Principles**

The general principles of the recruitment and selection procedures are set out in this section.

4.1 All members of staff, Trustees and Governors involved in the recruitment process, and in particular the Chair of a selection panel, should ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under employment legislation. At least one person on the selection panel should have the relevant safeguarding training for safer recruitment procedures.

4.2 If a Trustee, Governor or member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the application. In this situation it would normally be necessary for the Trustee, Governor or member of staff to have no further involvement in the process.

4.3 Documentation relating to applicants will be treated with complete confidentiality and in accordance to the requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA).

4.4 Applicants will have the right to feedback and to access any documentation held on them in accordance with the DPA.

#### **5. Advertising the role**

5.1 The recruitment and selection process should not commence until a full evaluation of the need for the role against the relevant school improvement plan and budget has been completed.

5.2 The recruitment of staff will take into account the need for new ideas to promote the Trust vision and also its commitment to equality and diversity.

5.3 As a minimum all vacancies will normally be advertised across Hertfordshire but may be advertised more widely. In some circumstances the Principal, with the agreement of the Trustees and Governors, may waive the need to advertise, for example:

- where positions may provide suitable alternative employment for an existing member of staff whose post has been identified for redundancy, including the termination of fixed term contracts, or following a restructuring exercise;
- for positions that require specialised expertise, where it can be demonstrated that a comprehensive search has been conducted and that the nominated individual is the most suitable person for the position.



5.4 Positions will be advertised using the most appropriate and cost effective medium to maximise the number of suitably qualified candidates likely to apply. This may include local and national publications and websites and will include the WHST visual identity.

5.5 Applicants will be treated with respect and provided with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding their suitability for the role.

5.6 All advertisements for all posts will clearly state the policy of the Trust through the inclusion of the following statement: ***'West Herts Community Free School Trust is committed to children and young people. All post holders will be subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.'***

5.7 The Trust may use an agency or external consultancy to assist in recruiting staff only where the vacancy is hard to fill.

5.8 Prospective applicants for posts will be provided with:

- an application form;<sup>[SEP]</sup>
- the selection process for the post;
- a job description and person specification;<sup>[SEP]</sup>
- a Trust and school information pack;
- the Trust's safer recruitment policy (this document);
- the Trust's safeguarding policy.<sup>[SEP]</sup>

All applicants will be required to complete the application form in full with a full explanation of any gaps in employment.

## 6.0 Selection process

6.1 The selection process should be:

- transparent;
- timely and cost effective;
- equitable;
- free from conflict of interest.

6.2 All recruitment will be based on agreed job descriptions and person specifications. Recruitment and selection must be conducted as an evidence-based process. Candidates should be assessed against agreed selection criteria, based on relevant knowledge, skills, competencies, experience and qualifications to perform the role. All decisions must be recorded.

6.3 Shortlisting must be undertaken by at least two individuals who are involved in the interviewing process, including one Governor. Interviews should normally be conducted by the Principal and at least one other person and all interviews for the same post must be conducted by the same panel. The Trust and the Chair of Governors should be involved in the selection process of any senior leadership appointments.



6.4 Where possible, references will be taken up prior to the interviews and all appointments will be subject to DBS clearance, medical checks and references.

6.4.1 References will be sought directly from the referee. References or testimonials provided by the candidate will never be accepted.

6.4.2 Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or email in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

6.4.3 Where necessary, previous employers who have not been named as referees will be contacted in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

6.4.4 Referees will always be asked specific questions about:

- the candidate's suitability for working with children and young people;
- any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings, that relate to the safeguarding of children;
- the candidate's suitability for this post.

6.4.5 It is the policy of some organisations to only provide generic references noting only the dates of employment. These references are not sufficient for safeguarding purposes and further references will be required.

6.4.6 Employees are entitled to see and receive, if requested, copies of their employment references.

## **7.0 Interview process**

7.1 Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates.

7.2 Any skills tests (e.g. presentations, in-tray exercises) must be directly related to the role and measured against objective criteria. Presentations for one post must be assessed by the same panel. Candidates must be notified of the details of any skills test when they are invited for interview and the selection process for teaching posts should include a presentation or demonstration of teaching skills.

7.3 Where required every effort must be made to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities. Advice can be sought from the Business Manager or the Herts for Learning HR advice and support service to which the schools subscribe.

7.4 Interviews will always be face-to-face. Telephone interviews may be used at the short-listing stage but will not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview (which may be via visual electronic link).



7.4 Interview questions must relate to the job requirements as exemplified in the person specification and the candidate's suitability for the position. The person specification should be used as the basis for determining the interview questions.

7.6 Candidates will always be required:

- to explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment;
- to explain satisfactorily any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to recruiters;
- to declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS check;
- to demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

7.7 Interview questions must appear on an interview assessment form on which answers to questions must be recorded.

7.8 The choice of appointee will be determined only by the members of the selection panel. The appointment of principals may require ratification by the Trust.

## **8 Secretary of State Prohibition Orders (teaching and management roles)**

8.1.1 In all cases where an applicant is to undertake a teaching role of any kind a Prohibition Order check will be made using the Employer Access Online Service. It is anticipated that this will be performed at the shortlisting stage but will in any case be made before any offer of employment is made.

8.2.1 Prohibition orders prevent a person from carrying out teaching work in schools, sixth form colleges, 16 to 19 academies, relevant youth accommodation and children's homes in England. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to work as a teacher in such a setting.

8.2.2 Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). Pending such consideration, the Secretary of State may issue an interim prohibition order if it is considered to be in the public interest to do so.

8.2.3 A section 128 direction 39 prohibits or restricts a person from taking part in the management of an independent school, including academies and free schools. A person who is prohibited is unable to participate in any management of an independent school such as: a management position in an independent school, academy or free school as an employee; a trustee of an academy or free school trust; a Governor or member of a proprietor body for an independent school; or a Governor on any governing body in an independent school, academy or free school that retains or has been delegated any management responsibilities. A check for a section 128 direction will be carried out using the Teacher Services' system. Where the person will be engaging in regulated activity, a DBS barred list check will also identify any section 128 direction.



## 9 Employment Checks

### 9.1 All successful applicants are required:

- to provide proof of identity;
- to complete a DBS application and receive satisfactory clearance;
- have a satisfactory certificate of good conduct relating to time spent living outside of the UK, where applicable;
- to pass a prohibition from teaching check;
- to pass a prohibition from management roles (section 128) check where applicable (part of barred list check for those in regulated activity);
- to provide actual certificates of professional qualifications, as deemed appropriate by the school (copies are not acceptable);
- to complete a confidential health questionnaire and be deemed mentally and physically fit to perform the role;
- to provide proof of their right to work in the United Kingdom.

The appointment of all new employees is subject to the receipt of a satisfactory DBS Certificate, references, medical checks, prohibition checks, copies of qualification and proof of identity.

### 9.2 Proof of identity, Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or professional status.

All applicants invited to attend an interview at the school will be required to bring their identification documentation such as passport, birth certificate, driving licence etc. with them as proof of identity/eligibility to work in UK in accordance with those set out in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and DBS Code of Practice Regulations.

In addition, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have actually obtained any academic or vocational qualification required for the position and claimed in their application form.

### 9.3 Fitness to undertake the role

A confidential pre-employment health questionnaire must be completed to verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role. It may be that following the health questionnaire, an individual is referred for a medical, through HR support services.

### 9.4 Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK

When appointing a UK citizen who has lived overseas or a non UK citizen, a Certificate of Good Conduct must be obtained (where possible) from the embassy of the country the applicant has specified they have spent a significant period of time in. This must happen where the applicant has lived or worked (including studying) in a foreign country for a period of 6 months within the last 5 years.



There are a number of exemptions to this:

- if the applicant is currently employed by the school and has already provided the certificate, which can be used for future appointments providing that there is no break in service;
- applicants that have spent time overseas as part of Her Majesty's Service i.e. Army, Navy, Airforce;
- applicant's that are seeking asylum will be unable to provide such documentation, as contacting the embassy may jeopardise their safety.

9.4.1 If an applicant is unable to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct, evidence must be presented to show that an attempt to obtain a copy has been made.

9.4.2 Any costs incurred for obtaining a Certificate of Good Conduct must be met by the individual and will not be reimbursed.

9.4.3 If an applicant is unable to obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct then a Risk Assessment Form must be completed and signed off. All other pre-employment checks must be completed. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 states "In addition, schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These further checks should include a check for information about any teacher sanction or restriction that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed, using the NCTL Teacher Services' system". Alternative checks could include references obtained from all employers abroad in the last five years that clarify that there are no disciplinary records in regard of safeguarding and that the previous employer has no concern regarding the potential employee working with children in a safeguarded environment (see paragraph 4.6). If the outcomes of these references are satisfactory then a risk assessment can be considered to progress the employment process and meet statutory guidance.

## **10 Single Central Register**

The school must keep a single central register. The single central register must cover all staff (including supply staff, and teacher trainees on salaried routes) who work at the school. Confirmation that these checks have been carried out along with the date the check was undertaken/obtained must be logged on this record for all employees of the school, prior to the commencement of the position.

## **11 Induction**

11.1 The school recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff.

11.2 All staff who are new to the school will receive induction training that will include the school's safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices, including Child Protection,



PREVENT, FGM awareness and Online safety. Safeguarding training will take place prior to working with children.

11.3 Regular meetings will be held during the first 6 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s).





## Principal Recruitment Plan

Action	Who
Decision to recruit	WHST
Review of job description and person specification	WHST
Advertise, locally and nationally - 4 weeks	Trust Business Manager
Open day for prospective candidates	WHST
Receive applications and shortlist	WHST (minimum 2 who will also form part of the selection panel)
Invite to interview	Chair of Trust
Request references	Trust Business Manager
Selection day	Trust selection panel
Ratification meeting	Trust/LGB
Send out offer letter	Chair of Trust
Arrange medical assessment, DBS check, qualification checks	Trust Business Manager
Induction	Trust Chief Executive

### Example of the application pack contents:

- recruitment brochure
- application form
- letter from WHCFS Trust Chair
- letter from chair of LGB
- job description and person specification
- form addressing the person specification criteria
- school brochure

### Interview process:

- written tasks and activities
- presentation
- interview with children
- lunch with Trust and parents
- formal interview



### Vice-Principal Recruitment Plan

Action	Who
Decision to recruit	Principal/ Trust
Review of job description and person specification	WHST
Advertise, locally and nationally - 4 weeks ahead for closing date	Trust Business Manager
Open day for prospective candidates	Local governing body and Principal
Receive applications and shortlist	Local governing body and Principal (minimum 2 who will also form part of the selection panel)
Invite to interview	Chair of local governing body
Request references	Principal
Selection day	Local governing body panel, Principal, WHST Chief Executive
Ratification meeting	Local governing body
Send out offer letter	Chair of local governing body
Arrange medical assessment, DBS check, qualification checks	Trust Business Manager
Induction	Principal/ WHST Chief Executive

### Teacher Recruitment Plan

Action	Who
Decision to recruit	Principal
Review of job description and person specification	WHST /Principal
Advertise, locally and nationally - 4 weeks ahead for closing date	SBM/Principal
Open day for prospective candidates	Local governing body and Principal
Receive applications and shortlist	Local governing body and Principal (minimum 2 who will also form part of the selection panel)
Invite to interview	Principal
Request references	Principal
Selection day	Local governing body panel, Principal
Confirm to Trust	Chair of local governing body
Send out offer letter	Chair of local governing body
Arrange medical assessment, DBS check, qualification checks	School Business Manager
Induction	Principal



### Other Staff Recruitment Plan

Action	Who
Decision to recruit	Principal
Review of job description and person specification	WHST
Advertise locally for 2 weeks	School Business Manager
Receive applications and shortlist	Principal and member of SLT
Invite to interview	Principal
Request references	Principal
Selection day	Principal plus member of SLT
Confirm to Trust	Principal
Send out offer letter	Principal
Arrange medical assessment, DBS check, qualification checks	School Business Manager
Induction	Principal