

# **Safer Recruitment Policy for all staff and volunteers**

<b>Owner</b>	Director of People
<b>Approved by</b>	Resources Committee
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## **Purpose and scope**

This policy provides a consistent approach to recruitment and selection across the Learning Community Trust, enabling 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.

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

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

This policy covers recruitment to permanent, temporary, and volunteer roles within the Learning Community Trust. The safer recruitment principles of the policy should also be applied to the appointment and vetting of volunteers to help to ensure they are suitable to work with children and are aware of safeguarding responsibilities.

## **Statutory Requirements**

The Learning Community Trust adheres 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 and the EYFS statutory framework for group and school- based providers 2025. Statutory requirements also fall under sections 175 of the Education Act 2002. While volunteers are not always subject to the same statutory checks as employees, this policy ensures that proportionate safeguarding checks and vetting are completed for all volunteers based on their level of contact with children. The academy is responsible for ensuring the suitability of contractors, supply, and self-employed individuals - where the employer cannot take on the check, such as prohibition - school trust will complete check.

## **Preparing to recruit**

Anyone within the Learning Community Trust involved in the recruitment and selection of staff is responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

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 holder's

responsibility for promoting and safeguarding children, and whether the post requires a DBS check and at what level.

For volunteers, a role description will be provided outlining the nature of duties, level of supervision, and safeguarding responsibilities.

The interview panel including Local Governors will be identified ensuring that at minimum of one member of the panel involved in the interview has completed Safer Recruitment Training which covers the requirements of part three KCSIE 2025, safer recruitment, prior to the commencement of recruitment.

Appropriate selection methods and documentation will be agreed and will always include an interview or formal meetings with volunteers to assess suitability and skill set. Where suitable and appropriate to the post pupils may be involved in the recruitment process.

The recruitment timetable will also be confirmed to ensure sufficient time is allowed for this process to be completed and incorporates the time required for pre interview checks including the return of criminal record self-disclosure forms, soft online searches, and the obtaining of references wherever possible.

The recruitment timetable will provide sufficient time to enable all pre-employment or volunteer vetting checks to be completed prior to the preferred candidate's commencement in post.

## Advertising

Any advert will include a statement about the Trusts commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils. Please confirm with your HR team you have the most up to date wording and archive old templates. The advert will also refer to the requirement of short-listed candidates to return the criminal self-disclosure forms and state where the post is exempt from The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act as amended.

The advert will clearly state the requirement of relevant DBS checks and include a link to or a copy of the schools relevant Safeguarding Policies, including this Safer Recruitment Policy. Where volunteers are being recruited, similar safeguarding statements will be included, making clear that references and DBS checks (where applicable) will be required **before** starting the role.

## The application process

All applicants will complete the Trust's standard application form – CVs are not accepted as part of any recruitment process as it does not meet the needs of recruitment in education.

- This application form should include the following information;
- personal details, current and former names, and current address;
- 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 and length of any gaps in employment/education;
- qualifications, the awarding body, and date of award; You will be required to provide evidence of qualifications relating to the role as part of the process.
- details of a minimum of two relevant referees (one referee should be the applicants current or most recent Employer/Line Manager (we are not able to accept references from friends) 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.

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.

The application form/pack will also make it clear that an online check will be undertaken should they be shortlisted. The recruiting manager or their appointed support member of staff will be responsible to ensure the candidate understands the requirements and processes.

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

For volunteers, a simplified volunteer application form will be used, but will include appropriate safeguarding declarations, references, and agreement to school policies.

## **The shortlisting process**

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

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. This process will also include any role specific qualifications required under EYFS regulations i.e. Learning Support Assistant / TA in foundation years to be paediatric first aid qualified and qualifications in line with ratio numbers.

The shortlisting assessment will be documented to ensure that there is a record should there be a challenge from any candidate. These records, along with the application form will be held in line with retention policy guidelines before being destroyed (excluding that for the appointed candidate). Please speak to Head of IT if unsure of current legislation.

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 candidate at interview.

## **Preparation for interview**

All shortlisted candidates will be required to complete the criminal record 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 Children's Barred List

- Prohibition from Teaching
- Overseas information
- Childcare Disqualification

Where a shortlisted candidate discloses something which would make it unlawful for us to employ them the offer of an interview may be withdrawn. We request honesty and transparency during this process, so we did not receive any queries or documentation that was not disclosed.

#### Online checks

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

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. Please seek advice from HR if required.

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.

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 children. They will seek appropriate advice from HR if they are unsure before sharing this information with any interview panel member.

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.

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

For volunteers, an online check will also be undertaken where appropriate, proportionate to the role and level of responsibility.

## References

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

One of these references should be from the current or most recent employer and have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority for teaching posts there will be an expectation that this is the Principal or Headteacher. If this is not the case, then it needs to be discussed with the Principal/ Headteacher.

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

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. Please contact HR if you require the template.

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

References will be scrutinised by the recruiting manager and Principal / Headteacher to ensure the content is accurate (as per the application form) and that there are no anomalies.

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

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

Where references have been provided by someone other than the named referee provided by a candidate, the reason for this reference will be investigated and the Principal / Headteacher made aware during the process. If candidates are coming from another school references should be received from the Headteacher of that school / Academy.

## **The selection process**



During the selection process the Trust / Academy 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. Pupils if used during the recruitment process will be used in a meaningful way.

Questions will be based on the job description and person specification and will be developed, structured, and agreed by the safer recruitment lead in advance prior to the interview.

The interview panel will identify and agree any areas for further exploration they wish to discuss with the candidates based on their application form, self-disclosure form, and references.

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.

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.

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 in line with our retention policy before being destroyed.

## **Offer of Employment**

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

## **Pre Employment Checks (including Volunteers)**

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken prior to confirming a final offer of employment or prior to a volunteer commencing their role:

- Identity Check this would include checking the name on the candidate's birth certificate, where this is available and evidence of changes of name since birth.
- 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 children's barred list if the individual is going to be working in regulated activity with children. (see further information below on DBS checks). There may be occasions where a DBS has not come back on the anticipated start date. As this point where all other checks have been completed and we have evidence a risk assessment process will commence for those whose checks are not back
- DBS check for volunteers, the level of DBS check will be determined by a risk assessment of the role, the nature of activities, and level of supervision.
- Occupational Health clearance, to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role and confirming 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 all governors, including the Headteacher and other members of staff who are CEO, Trustees and Governors, Heads of Department and other positions on the Senior and Executive Teams.

For volunteers, proof of identity and safeguarding checks will always be required, and where relevant, a risk assessment will determine the level of DBS and supervision required.

Prohibition checks (for teaching staff and those undertaking teaching work as defined in KCSIE 2025: any class based staff, 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 in EYFS and up to the age of 8 including those in in wrap around provision and those who manage this provision).

Overseas checks – this applies to candidates who have worked overseas for 12 months or more in the past 10 years and this is their first role in a school in England. They will require a certificate of good conduct from the country/ies they have resided in and the costs will be met by the candidate.

## DBS Checks

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 for those working with pupils who are vulnerable over the age of 18.

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.

Supervised volunteers undertaking occasional roles may not require an enhanced DBS, but the decision will always be documented via a risk assessment process and signed

off by the Headteacher/DSL & Trust HR. Unsupervised volunteers in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS with barred list check.

We do not currently expect our staff to register with the DBS update service.

Where a candidate is currently employed by an academy/central team within the Trust and a DBS was undertaken by that academy/central team originally a new DBS check will be required as part of good practice

We do not undertake a renewal process for our DBS checks as 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.

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.

## **Dealing with convictions**

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

A risk assessment will be completed. Where the assessment determines the matters are low risk this will be signed off by the Headteacher and a member of the Learning community Trust's HR team.

Where the risk is Moderate to High a Vetting Panel / group will be convened. This panel will include the Director of Education, Principal / Headteacher and Academy or Trust safeguarding lead as appropriate with HR representation. Documentation will be provided to all of the above for discussion.

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

## **Single Central Record (SCR)**

Each academy and trust central maintains 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 volunteers, governors, trustee, and members. At Academy level the SCR will be reviewed and signed off every half term by the Headteacher/Principal or DSL in each academy. The Trust overview the single central register once signed by Principal.

## **Induction**

All staff who are new to this organisation will receive induction training that will cover safeguarding expectations set out in KCSIE 2025 and all other school policies and guidance on safe working practices as well as the Learning Community Trust's Employee Code of Conduct. They will also be required to read Part 1 and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education, as a minimum. All volunteers will also receive a safeguarding induction prior to commencing their role, including training on school policies, whistleblowing, child protection procedures, and expected conduct.

## **Monitoring and review**

The Trust's Director of People will monitor the implementation of this policy, including making sure that it is updated to reflect the needs and circumstances of the Trust and the academies.