



## **MAT Safer Recruitment Policy**

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## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	3
2	Roles and Responsibilities .....	3
2.1	The Multi Academy Trust .....	3
2.2	Governing Bodies .....	3
2.3	Headteachers.....	3
2.4	Selection Panel.....	3
3	Inviting Applicants .....	4
4	Application Forms.....	4
5	References.....	5
6	Shortlisting and shortlisted candidates.....	5
7	The interview process .....	6
8	Pre- Employment Checks.....	7
8.1	Proof of identity .....	7
8.2	Proof of eligibility to work in the UK.....	7
8.3	DBS Certificates .....	7
8.4	Professional Qualifications.....	8
8.5	Satisfactory medical clearance .....	8
8.6	Childcare Disqualification Checks .....	8
8.7	Prohibition Order checks .....	9
8.8	Overseas Police Checks and Letters of Professional Standing.....	9
9	Existing Staff.....	10
10	Checks on Other Trusted Adults .....	10
10.1	Agency and third-party staff.....	10
10.2	Contractors.....	10
10.3	Trainee/student teachers .....	11
10.4	Volunteers .....	11
10.5	Additional check for governors .....	12
10.6	Pupils placed in alternative provision settings.....	12
11	Single Central Record .....	12
12	Induction and probation .....	12
12.1	New support staff employees .....	12
12.2	Staff with continuous service.....	13
12.3	Volunteers .....	13
12.4	Governors.....	13
13	External Referrals .....	13
13.1	Referral to the DBS .....	13
13.2	Referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) .....	13
	Appendix 1 - Guidance on Online Searches of Shortlisted Candidates .....	14

## **1 Introduction**

*It is vital that as part of their whole school or college approach to safeguarding, governing bodies and proprietors create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children in their school or college. As part of this culture, it is important that they adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities in schools and colleges.*

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 para 211

This sets out the minimum requirements of a recruitment process that aims to:

- Support you to attract the best possible applicants to vacancies.
- Help to deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.
- Support in identifying and rejecting applicants who are unsuitable to work with children or young people.

The procedures laid out in this policy apply to the recruitment of central MAT staff as well as those in schools.

## **2 Roles and Responsibilities**

### **2.1 The Multi Academy Trust**

With the exception of headteachers, heads of school, deputy heads and executive heads, the MAT will usually delegate the recruitment of staff and volunteers to the headteacher and governing body of the school.

Any changes to the staffing structure of the school or recruitment beyond that budgeted for the academic year must be approved by the Trust CEO.

### **2.2 Governing Bodies**

Must ensure the school has effective policies, procedures and resources in place for the safer recruitment of staff and volunteers in accordance with the DfE guidance and legal requirements

Must monitor compliance with DfE guidance and legal requirements

### **2.3 Headteachers**

Must ensure the school operates safer recruitment practices and appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers

Must ensure that all contractors and agencies used by the school comply with this policy.

Must promote the safeguarding of children and young people at every stage of the recruitment process

### **2.4 Selection Panel**

At least one person on any selection panel must have completed accredited safer recruitment training within the last three years.

### **3 Inviting Applicants**

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts of three months or more to encourage a diverse field of applicants, this normally includes both internal and external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and should include the statement below.

*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 post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. It is also subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and children's barred list check.*

The advert should also include the safeguarding responsibilities of the post as per the job description and person specification.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA 2018).

Prospective applicants will usually be supplied with a copy of the following:

- Job description and person specification
- The school's safeguarding and child protection policy
- The school's safer recruitment policy
- An application form (guidance notes for completing application forms may also be included)

All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, offer of employment withdrawn if the applicant has been selected or summary dismissal if the applicant has commenced employment and where appropriate a referral to the police and/or DBS and/or Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA).

### **4 Application Forms**

Where a role involves engaging in regulated activity relevant to children, the school should include a statement in the application form or elsewhere in the information provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children.

All applicants must complete an application in full. CVs will not be accepted. On their application form applicants must provide:

- personal details, current and former names, current address and national insurance number;
- 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 any gaps in employment (a gap is a period of four weeks or more);
- qualifications, the awarding body and date of award;
- details of referees/references (see below for further information); 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 applicant should sign the application form to confirm that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. If the application form is signed electronically the candidate should be asked to physically sign the form during the interview, if shortlisted.

## **5 References**

Prior to interview, references will be obtained directly from the referees stated where possible. Obtaining references prior to the interview will allow any discrepancies to be discussed during the selection stage.

Requirements:

- A minimum of two references must be obtained.
- References must cover a period of five years prior to the date of application.
- One reference must be from the applicant's current/most recent employer.

References or testimonials provided by the candidate will never be accepted, nor will references addressed 'to whom it may concern'.

References should always be from a verifiable source and when requested from an education setting will always be requested from the current headteacher or principal, even if they were not in post when the applicant worked at that setting.

Where necessary, references may be contacted by telephone or email in order to clarify any queries.

A standard reference pro-forma will usually be used which will include asking about:

- The candidate's suitability to work with children and young people.
- Any disciplinary warnings (including expired warnings), that related to the safeguarding of children.
- The candidate's suitability for the post as outlined in the job description.
- Whether the candidate has been subject to any formal capability procedures.

Some organisations will not provide a detailed reference and only confirm the period for which the person was employed. Where this is the case appropriate other methods should be used to determine the applicant's suitability.

Personal references can only be accepted where the applicant has no previous employment record or there are good reasons the employer cannot provide a reference (e.g., company closed).

## **6 Shortlisting and shortlisted candidates**

Shortlisting of candidates and review of completed application forms should occur without delay after the closing date of the job advert.

Completed application forms should be reviewed by at least two people, one of whom will be safer recruitment trained. The job description and person specification of the role will provide the shortlisting criteria for the post.

Once the shortlisting of candidates has been undertaken, an appropriate member of staff, ideally one who is not directly involved in the shortlisting stage, should undertake an online search of all shortlisted candidates. For example, they should carry out a Google or social media search. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview. (Further information can be found in Appendix 1.)

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to participate in the recruitment process. The selection panel will determine what exercises are appropriate to include to identify the most suitable person for the post(s), this will always include an interview.

When inviting candidates to an interview, they will be asked to complete the criminal records disclosure form and return it to the school prior to the interview. This information should only be requested from shortlisted candidates. It should be made clear to candidates that the school reserves the right to withdraw any invitation to an interview if the candidate fails to return this form as required.

A shortlisted candidate should sign the application form to confirm that the information provided is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge and belief. If signed electronically the candidate should be asked to physically sign the form at interview.

Candidates will be expected to bring with them to the interview evidence of their:

- Right to work in the UK; (see section 8.2)
- Proof of identity (see section 8.1); and
- Professional qualifications (see section 8.4).

A photocopy of the above evidence may be taken at the interview stage.

## **7 The interview process**

Prior to the interview taking place, the panel will decide on the selection criteria to best demonstrate the skills required for the post.

If any preparation is required in advance of the interview, the candidate will be advised of this.

Interviews should be in person, if remotely the applicant must be visible. A minimum of two people but ideally three should be on an interview panel, of which at least one will be safer recruitment trained. The same panel who shortlisted will interview the applicants. This is to ensure consistency throughout the process.

During the interview, the panel will explore with each candidate:

- Reasons for any gaps identified in the application since leaving school or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently.
- Any discrepancies between information supplied on the application form and other information available such as references already received and qualifications.
- Any information which is likely to show on a DBS check.
- Their reasons for applying for the role and their motives for working with children.
- Their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

The selection panel should probe the candidate for supplementary information in order to clarify information they have received, including responses to questions asked.

The selection panel should also ask the candidate about any relevant information disclosed on the criminal records disclosure form. If an online search has been undertaken, discuss any relevant information obtained via this search.

The panel should keep objective notes for each candidate. The notes should contain the name of the candidate along with the name of the member of the interview panel making the notes, and the date of the interview.

At the end of the interview process the panel will determine which candidate(s) to appoint to the role(s). Any offer of employment will be subject to pre-employment checks. If the panel are unable to reach a unanimous decision regarding who to offer the post(s) to, then if there is an odd number on the panel it will be a majority decision; if there is an even number on the panel then the chair of the panel will have the casting vote.

## **8 Pre- Employment Checks**

As outlined above any offer of employment will be subject to pre-employment checks. These include:

- Proof of identity (see section 8.1)
- Proof of eligibility to work in the UK (see section 8.2)
- Satisfactory DBS clearance to be received before they commence employment (see section 8.3)
- Providing original certificates of relevant professional qualifications as required by the school (see section 8.4).
- Satisfactory medical clearance (see section 8.5)
- A childcare disqualification check, where necessary (see section 8.6)
- A clear prohibition from teaching check (for roles involving teaching work only) (see section 8.7)
- Overseas police check if they have lived and worked abroad (see section 8.8)
- Letter(s) of professional standing if they have taught abroad and are being appointed to a role involving teaching work (also see section 8.8).

### **8.1 Proof of identity**

All applicants will be required to bring in documentation which establishes the proof of their Identity as outlined [here](#). It is best practice that this includes seeing a copy of the original birth certificate.

### **8.2 Proof of eligibility to work in the UK**

The successful applicant will have to demonstrate they are eligible to work in the UK as outlined [here](#).

### **8.3 DBS Certificates**

Prior to commencing work, a satisfactory DBS clearance should be obtained. The successful applicant will be required to complete a DBS application or provide the necessary information to enable their details to be checked using the DBS portable service.

All appointees are required to bring in their original DBS certificate to the school so the information on this can be verified against the information already on file. If the post involves working in regulated activity a separate check of the Children's Barred List will also be made.

If any information is disclosed on the DBS certificate, then a risk assessment must be completed to determine whether it is still appropriate to continue with the appointment. This risk assessment will usually be completed by two people, one of whom will be the headteacher. The named safeguarding governor or another member of the leadership team may also assist with the completion of this risk assessment. A copy of the risk assessment must be retained on the personnel file.

To help schools comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, when the school chooses to retain a copy of the DBS certificate, there should be a valid reason for doing so and it should not be kept for longer than six months. When the information is destroyed the school may keep a record of the fact that vetting was carried out, the result and the recruitment decision taken if they choose to.

#### **8.4 Professional Qualifications**

The selection panel will determine what qualifications are deemed relevant for each post and the appointee is required to provide proof of their qualifications prior to commencing employment.

#### **8.5 Satisfactory medical clearance**

All appointees will be asked to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire. For school staff this will be reviewed by the occupational health provider. It may be necessary for the appointee to attend a consultation with an occupational health advisor or consultant and/or a medical report may also be required. It will be for occupational health provider to determine what additional information is required. The cost of any occupational health checks will be paid by the school.

#### **8.6 Childcare Disqualification Checks**

In accordance with the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and Childcare Act 2006, a childcare disqualification check will be required if the post:

- Involves working with children up to and including the school year in which they will have their fifth birthday. This typically includes those working with nursery and reception aged children, along with those working in breakfast and after-school clubs and providing lunch time supervision for children in this age group.
- Involves providing later years provision to children up to and including the school year in which they will reach their eighth birthday, for example breakfast clubs and after-school clubs.
- Anyone involved in the management of the above two groups of staff.

If information is received indicating that an individual falls within one of the disqualification criteria, providing they are not on the Children's Barred List they can apply to Ofsted for a waiver.

## **8.7 Prohibition Order checks**

A prohibition order check is required for anyone appointed to a teaching position **or support staff** role which involves planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils; delivering lessons to pupils; assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils; and reporting on the development, progress and attainment of when not being supervised by a qualified teacher. A person who is prohibited from teaching must not be appointed to undertake teaching work or work as a teacher.

Prohibition orders are made by the Secretary of State following consideration by a professional conduct panel convened by the Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA). An interim prohibition order may be issued if it is considered in the public interest to do so.

## **8.8 Overseas Police Checks and Letters of Professional Standing**

For staff who have lived or worked outside the UK for 3 months or more in the last 10 years schools must make 'appropriate' further pre-employment checks. Follow the same approach no matter which country the applicant has lived or worked in.

The school needs to be satisfied that they have undertaken all reasonable checks to ensure safer recruitment processes has been completed. This may include obtaining any further information that occurred outside of the UK.

These checks could include, where available:

- Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - Home Office guidance can be found on [GOV.UK](#); and for all positions
- For teaching positions, the appointee should obtain a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country, or countries in which the appointee has resided/worked, confirming they have not been given any sanctions or restrictions, and/or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to work with children
- If a candidate is young and/or doesn't have much employment history, ask for a certificate of good conduct or character reference from organisations where they have studied, completed a work placement or volunteered

Applicants can find contact details of regulatory bodies in the EU/EEA and Switzerland on the [Regulated Professions database](#). Appointees can also find more information on the government website [Check which professions are regulated in the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

Where available, such evidence will be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess their suitability. Any costs incurred in obtaining additional checks will be met by the appointee and will not be reimbursed by the school.

If this information is not available, schools should seek alternative methods of checking suitability and/or undertake a risk assessment which evidences how the school has tried to obtain this information which supports their decision-making process on whether to proceed with the appointment. For further information refer to statutory guidance.

## **9 Existing Staff**

In certain circumstances the school will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more.

## **10 Checks on Other Trusted Adults**

### **10.1 Agency and third-party staff**

The school must obtain written notification from any agency, or third-party organisations that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks, as required by the statutory regulations, that would otherwise have been undertaken by the school. The school will also check the agency worker is the same person for who the checks have been made. The agency worker will be expected to provide photo ID.

A DBS certificate should be provided by the agency or third-party organisation and the agency worker is required to bring in the original DBS certificate either prior to starting or on the first day of an assignment. Depending on the information disclosed, a risk assessment may need to be undertaken.

### **10.2 Contractors**

A letter of assurance is required from any external third-party contractor or provider regarding confirmation of the pre-employment checks undertaken on their employees who attend the school site. This needs to be provided prior to or on arrival at the school and held on file for the duration of the contract.

The school should ensure that any contractor and any employee of the contractor or sub-contractor who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

The school will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors and the contractor will be expected to reimburse the school for any cost incurred when doing this.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

The school will check the identity of all contractors and their staff each time they arrive at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, working with children, as covered in paragraph 8.6, the school will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare

(Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and Childcare Act 2006.

Where the school decides that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and does not carry out such checks, they will retain a record of their assessment. This will include the school's evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

### **10.3 Trainee/student teachers**

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by the school, the school will ensure that all necessary pre-employment checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, the school will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

If the role involves working with pupils, as described in paragraph 8.6, whether the trainee is salaried by the school or fee-funded, checks will include ensuring that the individual is not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and Childcare Act 2006.

### **10.4 Volunteers**

The school will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity.

This risk assessment will consider:

- the nature of the work with children
- what the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information offered by staff, parents and other volunteers,
- whether the volunteer has other employment or undertaken voluntary activities where referees can advise on their suitability and
- whether the role is eligible for a DBS check and if so, at what level.
- Retain a record of this risk assessment on file
- Determine whether to ask the volunteer to complete an application form, attend an interview (which will include exploring their motives for volunteering to work with children and their ability to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people) and whether to take up references.
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and Childcare Act 2006, if undertaking work as outlined in paragraph 8.6. Where the school decides that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and they do not carry out such checks, they will undertake and retain a risk assessment.

The risk assessment will include the evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

## **10.5 Additional check for governors**

In addition to the checks above outlined for volunteers, all governors will also have a section 128 check (as a section 128 direction disqualifies an individual from being a school governor).

## **10.6 Pupils placed in alternative provision settings**

Where the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider, the school will obtain a letter of assurance from the provider they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there.

## **11 Single Central Record**

All schools must maintain a record of pre-employment checks referred to in the School Staffing Regulations as the register and more commonly known as the single central record or SCR.

As a minimum all staff including trainees, agency and third-party staff must be included on the single central record— even if they work for one day

The single central record must show whether the following checks have been undertaken:

- An identity check, (identification checking guidelines can be found on the GOV.UK website);
- A barred list check;
- An enhanced DBS check requested/certificate provided; a prohibition from teaching check;
- Further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK;
- A check of professional qualifications, where required; and
- A check to establish the person's right to work in the United Kingdom

It is usual that checks undertaken on volunteers, governors and regular visitors are also recorded on the single central record.

## **12 Induction and probation**

### **12.1 New support staff employees**

New employees without any continuous service will be subject to a probationary period as outlined in the school's probationary procedure. There will also be an effective local induction which includes ensuring that the employee is fully aware of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, and they are able to apply these.

The induction and the probation procedure should assess the new employee is demonstrating safe behaviour, that appropriate boundaries are being maintained, and the employee can identify causes of concern and, know when to report them and to whom. If there are any concerns about their ability to follow safeguarding policies and procedures, the school must ensure the probationary policy is correctly applied and/or contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if necessary.

## **12.2 Staff with continuous service**

For staff with continuous service, the school will ensure there is an effective local induction which includes ensuring the employee is fully aware of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and they are able to apply these.

## **12.3 Volunteers**

There will also be a settling in period for volunteers, this again will include a local safeguarding induction. If the settling-in period reveals that the volunteer is not suited to a particular role, or there are any emerging safeguarding concerns, the volunteer can be asked to leave and stand down at any point.

## **12.4 Governors**

If the volunteer is a governor, then advice must be sought from the CEO.

# **13 External Referrals**

## **13.1 Referral to the DBS**

The school is legally obliged to make a referral to the DBS where they remove an individual from regulated activity (or would have removed an individual had they not left), and they believe the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children and/or adults,
- satisfied the harm test in relation to children and/or vulnerable adults; or
- been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence.

## **13.2 Referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA)**

If there is a substantiated safeguarding allegation against someone undertaking teaching work or a volunteer who is a qualified teacher, the school must refer the employee to the TRA in accordance with statutory guidance.

## **Appendix 1 - Guidance on Online Searches of Shortlisted Candidates**

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 says at paragraph 226 '*as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges should consider carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview. Schools and colleges should inform shortlisted candidates that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks.*'

Schools should consider their obligations carefully under this paragraph. As this is statutory guidance, the advice is the checks should be undertaken unless there is a very good reason not to.

The requirement is only to undertake searches for shortlisted candidates - it is not necessary to do it for all applicants.

There is no statutory guidance as to what format the checks should take, many settings are choosing to simply put the shortlisted candidate's name in the search bar when doing a general internet search. Adding "media" "crown court" "magistrates court" "convicted" after a candidate's name may provide relevant information. The purpose is to help identify any issues or incidents which would either harm the reputation of the school or make the candidate unsuitable to work with children.

Schools should also be mindful that there are some names which are more usual than others and so must ensure they are looking at the correct person online.

The guidance states "*might want to explore with the applicant at interview*". It is possible to determine that the content is so serious that you opt to bring the recruitment process to an end. If you continue, you put the content to them at interview in the same way you would any issues in a reference or adverse information on a DBS check.

When undertaking recruitment, it is important to ensure a fair and equitable process is followed for all candidates. If schools find information on one shortlisted candidate but not on the others, careful consideration should be given what to do with this, including whether it is relevant to the post they are applying for. Advice from your HR provider should be sought.

## **Summary of changes to the policy**

<b>Document control</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Update(s)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
01/09/22	6 – Shortlisting	Amendment to reflect change at paragraph 221 in <a href="#">KCSIE 2022</a> that as part of the shortlisting process schools should consider undertaking an online search on all shortlisted candidates.	
01/09/22	7 – Selection event	Amended to include at interview the panel should probe about any relevant information obtained during the online searches	
16/12/2022	14- Appendix 1	Appendix added	
October 2024	Whole document	KCSIE updated to 2024, paragraph numbers and quotes checked and updated.	