



SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

'For those agencies whose job it is to protect children and vulnerable people, the harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed.....'

Bichard Report, 2004, p12, para 20

AIMS

This policy has been developed to ensure that the recruitment of staff to work at any Academy within the Sacred heart Catholic Academy is compliant with DfE guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education: April 2020) so that the risk of recruiting someone who intends to harm is minimised. It applies to all people who work at any of the academies in the Sacred heart Catholic Academy Trust, either paid or voluntary.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The importance of safeguarding and protecting children attending our academies should be promoted as much as possible throughout the recruitment process in order to deter would-be abusers.

Timeline

The need for a thorough safe recruitment process is paramount and timelines for the appointment of staff will vary depending on the time it takes to receive all of the appropriate pre-employment checks and for the candidate to serve a notice period. It is recognised that appointments often need to take place speedily to ensure continuity of provision for the children/young people in our academies, however no appointment process will circumvent the measures described in this policy for the sake of expediency.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

At the start of the recruitment process it is important to define what the responsibilities of the postholder towards academy will be, as well as the qualifications and experience needed to perform the role.

All Job Descriptions will, as a minimum detail:

- Job Title
- Grade/Scale of Post
- Review Date
- Job Purpose
- Line Management
- Specific Responsibilities
- Skills & Abilities
- Responsibilities
- The postholder's specific responsibility towards the promotion and the practice of safeguarding the welfare of children that they come into contact with through their job.

All Person Specifications will, as a minimum, detail:

- Qualifications required
- Professional Registrations (if required)
- Define the skills, competencies and previous experience (required)
- The requirement to be cleared by the DBS for work with children

Each requirement on the person specification will be graded as either 'Essential' or 'Desirable'. These grades will be used for shortlisting purposes after the closing date. How these issues will be tested – e.g. application form, interview, or assessment day, will be stated.

Advertisements

The advertisement for a vacancy will demonstrate our commitment to safer recruitment and vetting procedures in order to act as a deterrent to would-be abusers.

All recruitment advertisements will display the following:

- Sacred heart Catholic Academy Trust name and logo and the name and logo of the base Academy.
- Post Title
- Hours (this should indicate if full or part time)
- Grade or Scale
- Salary including any allowances offered e.g. TLR
- Permanent or Fixed Term (if fixed term the duration of the contract should be stated)
- Advert Text (which should detail the main responsibilities of the post)
- Safeguarding Children Statement: *“Sacred heart Catholic Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The successful applicants will be expected to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check.”*
- Closing Date

Application Packs

All covering letters sent with application packs will include the following paragraph:

“Sacred heart Catholic Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children as its number one priority. This commitment to robust Recruitment, Selection and Induction procedures extends to organisations and services linked to the academy on its behalf”

The following, as a minimum, will be included in the pack:

- Application Form
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Further information relating to the base Academy
- DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) – A Guide for Applicants
- An example of a CES contract

Shortlisting

After the closing date, the HR/Office/School Business Manager will remove the Equalities and Diversity Monitoring Information sheets from the rear of the application form before handing applications over to the recruitment panels/officers. S/he will review the information provided and notify the recruitment panel/officer if anyone has declared that they belong to an under-represented group in the academy staff.

The recruitment panel/officer will review all applications and match against the person specification. Those who meet all of the relevant essential criteria will form a 'long list'. If there are a large number of applications meeting the essential criteria, then only those also meeting the most desirable criteria will be invited for interview. Wherever possible, those candidates who declare a protected characteristic which is under-represented in the academy will be invited for interview if they meet all of the essential criteria on the person specification.

Interviews

The interview process will allow time for any discrepancy in a candidate's application or references to be scrutinised and clarified. Interviewers will question candidates regarding any employment gaps, criminal record disclosures, fitness for the role, previous experience, suitability for the post and their motivation to work with children. Recruiting panels/officers will be certain they have explored all relevant areas before they offer a post.

All interviews will be carried out on face to face basis. All interview panels should include a representative of the Local Governing Body and will include at least one person who has successfully completed safer recruitment training. This will enable the scrutiny of each candidate's motivation to work with children by a trained interviewer. The composition of an interview panel will reflect the nature of the post but will always follow the requirements of the Scheme of Delegation.

References

These will be requested prior to interview and be available to the recruiting panel/officer on the day of the interview. One of the referees must be the candidate's current or most recent employer. Open references will not be accepted neither will references which have been provided by the candidate. Referees for all candidates will be asked specific role and child protection related questions. This avoids references which may have been written as part of a compromise agreement and would not state any adverse qualities or incidents involving the candidate.

When references are received prior to interview, the HR/School Business/Office Manager will follow up any discrepancies or issues to enable the panel to make a decision with reference to all the facts available at the time. Gaps and inconsistencies will be followed up before an offer of employment is made.

Employment Gaps

Our application form allows for candidates to inform us of any gaps in their employment history. The HR/School Business/Office Manager will check for these gaps and highlight any found to the recruitment panel. These will be investigated at interview, along with the reason for them not being

disclosed on the application form. The interview panel will explore patterns of repeated change in career or employers at interview, ensuring that the reasons for this are fully explored.

Qualification Verification

At interview, essential qualifications required for the post, including those set by statute, will be verified by the HR/Office/School Business Manager. Any concerns will be made known to the recruiting panel/officer immediately. A photocopy of all the original qualification certificates will be taken and if the candidate is successful, these will be placed on their personal file. If the candidate is unsuccessful, these will be securely destroyed.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

Disclosure of Criminal Record

Posts within schools are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (updated guidance March 2014), therefore as a prospective employer, we encourage candidates to disclose any *unspent* and *spent* convictions during the application stage by including space for this on our application form. Disclosing a criminal background will not be used as a reason to not shortlist a candidate, unless it involves violence and/or the safety of children.

Having a criminal conviction will not necessarily bar a person from working with children. Successful candidates will be required to complete a DBS application form. Once Enhanced DBS clearance is verified, any discrepancy in convictions declared on the application form and the DBS clearance will be discussed with the candidate and may lead to the offer of employment being withdrawn with immediate effect, even if the person has commenced work.

Regulated Activity

An Enhanced DBS check is needed for all staff engaging in regulated activity – see page 10 for flowchart.

For most appointments, an enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be required as the majority of staff will be engaging in regulated activity. A person will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' if as a result of their work they:

- will be responsible, on a regular basis, in any setting for the care or supervision of children; or
- will regularly work in a school or college at times when children are on school or college premises (where the person's work requires interaction with children, whether or not the work is paid (unless they are a supervised volunteer), or whether the person is directly employed or employed by a contractor); or
- will regularly come into contact with children under 18 years of age.

A supervised volunteer who regularly teaches or looks after children is not in regulated activity.

Post Interview Checks

Any offer of employment to any post at an Academy with the Sacred heart Catholic Academy Trust will be subject to the following:

- **Employment history and references**

- We will always ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, we will check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and reasons for leaving.
- References will be sought on all shortlisted candidates, including internal ones, before interview, so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.
- On receipt, satisfactory references will be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily by the HR/Office/School Business Manager. The referee will be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate; for example if the answers are vague. They will also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the candidate.

- **Verification of Candidates Identity**

It is vital that we know who our employees are and have evidence to prove this. Evidence of identity will be sought as part of the enhanced DBS check. We will verify a candidate's identity from current photographic ID and we will ask to see proof of address. Photocopies of documentation will be taken by the HR/School Business/Office Manager and kept on file for anyone appointed to work in one of our academies. Where a candidate is not appointed, this documentation will be securely destroyed.

- **Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List Check**

- All employees will take part in regulated activity (with the exception of cleaning staff who leave the building before pupils arrive) and therefore we will require them to be checked against the Children's Barred List and obtain an enhanced DBS check. Morning cleaning staff will be required to complete a standard DBS check and be checked against the Children's Barred List.
- There is no requirement to obtain an enhanced DBS check if in the three months prior to beginning work in their employment, the candidate has worked:
 - in a school in England in a post which brought them into regular contact with children or in any post in a school since 12 May 2006;
OR
 - in a college in England in a position which involved the provision of education and regularly caring for, training, supervising or being in sole charge of children or young people under the age of 18.
- The Principal/Headteacher will review the completed DBS check and determine if it meets the required standard. Where it does not, the subject to contract offer of employment will be withdrawn with immediate effect. Advice and guidance should be sought from the HR Advisor or solicitors in this instance.

- **Medical Clearance**
Successful candidates will be required to complete a medical questionnaire, for assessment by Occupational Health. Depending on the answers given by the candidate, Occupational Health may request an appointment to assess fitness for work. Offer holders are confirmed as medically cleared once a letter has been received from Occupational Health declaring them fit for the post for which they have applied.
- **Prohibition Order**
The HR/Office/School Business Manager will ensure that a candidate who is a registered teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State. They will use the Employer Online Service to check this detail.
- **Right to work in the UK**
The HR/Office/School Business Manager will request documentation from the candidate to verify their right to work in the UK. This will be checked against the requirements of the Border Agency. Where the right to work in the UK cannot be verified, the offer of employment will be immediately withdrawn and the Border Agency notified of the details of the applicant.
- **Overseas Check**
If the candidate has lived or worked outside of the UK, the HR/Office/School Business Manager will complete any further checks which are appropriate by the headteacher/principal.
- **Verification of Professional Qualifications**
The HR/Office/School Business Manager will request that successful candidates provide evidence of the qualifications that they have detailed on their application form. A copy of the certificates will be kept on the personnel file of the employee.
- **Verification of Professional Registration**
Some posts require a professional registration with regulatory body. This will be evidenced and placed on file, if the Person Specification states it is an essential criteria. The HR/School Business/Office Manager will verify the registration and will make a copy of this and place it on file

Advice on the process can be obtained either from the trust's HR Advisor or Solicitor.

These checks will be made clear to candidates 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 pre-employment checks to take place. The HR/School Business/Office Manager will oversee this process. The candidate will not be made an unconditional offer at any point prior to the receipt of all pre-employment checks which are deemed acceptable by the recruiting panel/officer.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Starting employment before receipt of DBS check

If the Principal/Headteacher wishes for an individual to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available then a risk assessment (see appendix 1) should be completed and held by the HR/School Business/Office Manager to identify any risks that this should pose to the students. The Principal/Headteacher will make the decision as to whether it is appropriate for this person to start employment after reviewing this document. The HR/School Business/Office Manager should make arrangements to ensure that the individual is appropriately supervised and that all other checks, including a separate Children's Barred List check has been completed.

Temporary Staff Employed Directly By The Academy

Staff employed on a temporary contract issued by the Academy will follow the same recruitment process as any other permanent employee. All pre-employment checks must be completed.

Peripatetic Tutors and Agency Staff (Including Agency Supply Teachers)

All service providers/staffing agencies providing staff to undertake regulated activity will be required to provide evidence of the same pre-employment checks that the Academy would complete if they were directly employing the staff themselves. This should be submitted in writing and in advance of the provider starting work and should be agreed as part of any contract between the Academy and provider. We reserve the right to view the original copy of the disclosure from the agency if it contains additional information. Evidence of checks from external providers will be recorded on the Central Record by the HR/School Business/Office Manager.

If evidence is not provided then the Academy will not allow the peripatetic tutors or agency staff to have unsupervised access to children.

Contractors etc

Children should not be allowed in areas where builders are working for Health and Safety reasons, so there should be little opportunity for workers to be unsupervised with children. It is difficult to say that there will not be times when contact with a child occurs, however this will be managed by the Head Teacher/Principal who will use their professional judgement to determine supervision levels.

Anyone entering academy premises to undertake activities which are not classed as regulated will be required to verify their identity, providing documents such as a passport or driver's licence along with company or council ID. The host Academy will take all necessary precautions to ensure that the named individual is who they say they are.

Volunteers Engaging in Regulated Activity

Many volunteers in Academies have the same unsupervised access to children as employees. A child will not consider a distinction between a volunteer and a member of staff when seeking help or support. An Enhanced DBS check incorporating a Children's Barred List check must be carried out prior to the volunteer starting their duties. Two references will also be required - one of these must be from their current or most recent employer/voluntary organisation. Open references will not be accepted

neither will references which have been provided by the candidate. These checks will be carried out for all volunteers engaging in regulated activity.

If such a volunteer becomes a paid employee, then all pre-employment checks must be completed with the exception of the Enhanced DBS check as it will already be held by the academy.

Volunteers Not Engaging in Regulated Activity

A volunteer who is supervised at all times does not require a DBS check as they are not engaging in regulated activity. If such a volunteer becomes a paid employee, then all pre-employment checks must be completed including an Enhanced DBS check should be sought to reflect the change from volunteer to employee status.

Single Central Register

Each academy will keep a Central Record of all staff that provides confirmation that relevant checks have been taken such as:

- Verification of Identity (Name/DOB/Address)
- Qualifications (Qualifications required to do the job and any professional registrations required)
- Children's Barred List check
- Disclosure and Barring Service check
- Employer Access Online
- Overseas Criminal Record Checks (applicable for any employee who has spent a period of time abroad)
- Professional references
- Health check
- QTS check
- Right to work in the UK

This record will be kept by the HR/School Business/Office Manager.

