



Highfield Ely
Academy

Candidate Pack
Headteacher
SUMMER 2026

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Dear applicant



Thank you for your interest in becoming a Headteacher with Active Learning Trust. I know that choosing where to build your career is a big decision, and before I share the details of the role, I want to tell you why this is such a special place to work.

At ALT, we do things differently. We are a values-led organisation that believes our people are our greatest strength. We invest deeply in the adults who work with us, because we know that when they thrive, our pupils thrive too.

Ours is a community built on trust, care and ambition – where every member of staff is encouraged to discover their strengths and to take opportunities. As a Headteacher at ALT, you will be expected to nurture the next generation of leaders, and to foster an environment where students and staff alike feel empowered, valued and inspired.

We don't see education as just a system; we see it as a moral mission. Every day, our staff bring energy, compassion and commitment to their roles, united by the belief that every child deserves the very best. In turn, our trust delivers high quality professional development and unwavering support so that together we can achieve extraordinary things.

If you share our values and our passion for making a difference, we would be delighted to hear from you. I look forward to the possibility of welcoming you into our Trust – a place where people matter, potential is nurtured, and purpose drives everything we do.

With warm regards,



Lynsey Holzer
Chief Executive Officer

Highfield Ely Academy

Highfield Ely Academy is a special school for pupils aged 2–25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). We support children and young people with a wide range of learning difficulties, meeting their communication, sensory, physical and medical needs while helping them achieve their full potential.

Every pupil who joins Highfield is unique, and we believe their education should reflect that. We take time to understand each child's individual needs, interests, preferred communication methods, EHCP and future aspirations. Learning is carefully tailored through one of our four curriculum pathways, with support designed to help every pupil make meaningful progress academically, socially, physically and emotionally.

Progress looks different for every pupil. For some, it may be developing communication, confidence or independence. For others, it could be learning to follow a routine, participating in new activities, improving mobility, building relationships or preparing for life beyond school. Whatever the goal, we recognise and celebrate every achievement and the difference it makes to each pupil's life.

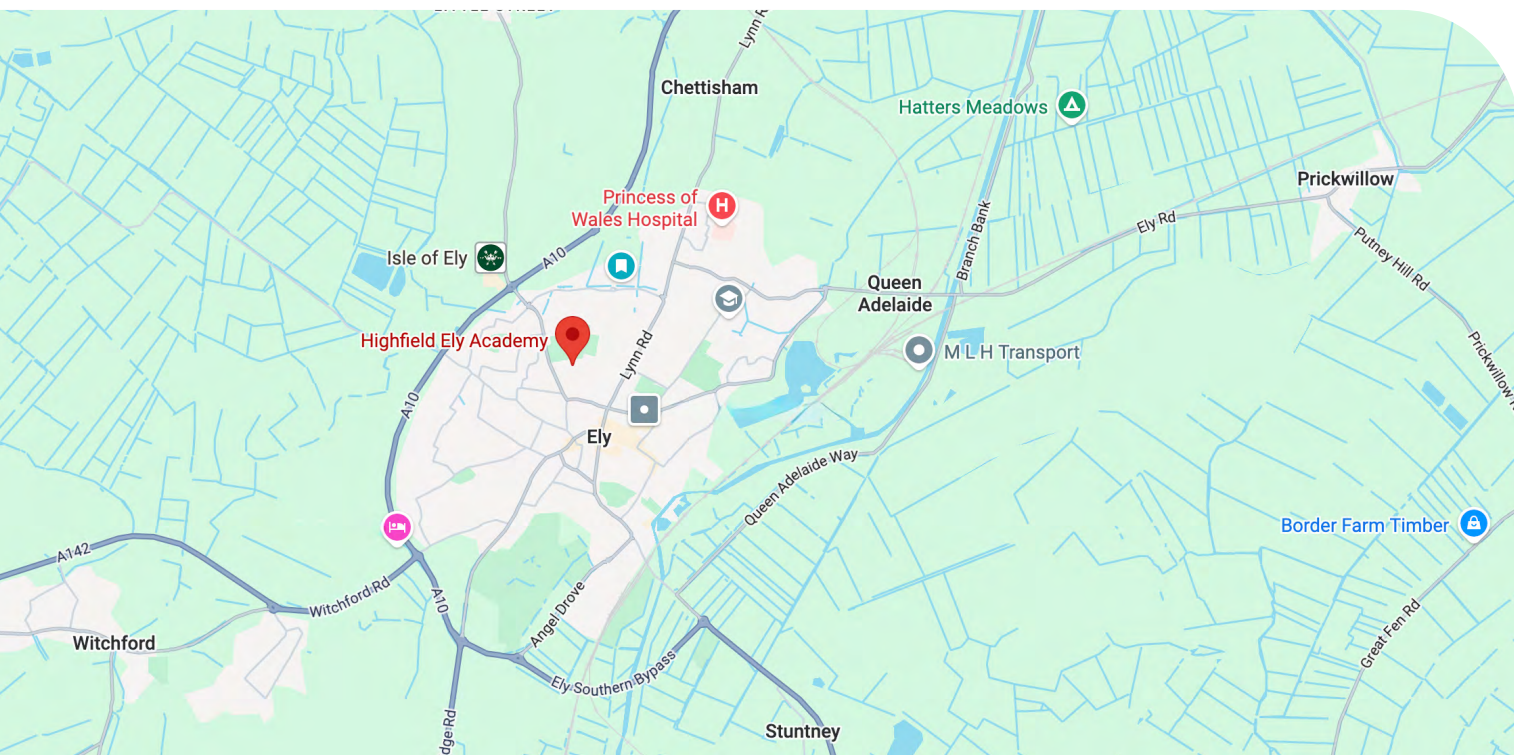
Developing practical skills for life beyond the classroom is central to our approach. Pupils benefit from a range of enriching experiences, including our life skills area, sensory garden and onsite farm, as well as cooking, horticulture and carefully planned community visits.

These opportunities allow pupils to practise essential life skills in meaningful, engaging ways that build confidence and independence.

We also work hard to create an environment where every pupil feels safe, understood and valued. Many children arrive with very different experiences of education, and some need time to build trust and feel settled. Our staff work closely together to ensure every pupil is known as an individual and receives the personalised support they need to thrive.

This commitment is reflected in the feedback we receive from parents and carers, who tell us they see their children becoming happier, more confident and more engaged in learning. They value the school's culture of acceptance, respect and inclusion—something we are immensely proud of.

At Highfield Ely Academy, we believe that feeling safe, accepted and cared for provides the foundation for success. By nurturing every pupil as an individual, we help them enjoy learning, communicate with confidence, develop greater independence and take their next steps with optimism and pride.



Active Learning Trust

Overview

Our multi-academy Trust was originally established in 2012 and is currently made up of 1,600 staff across 21 schools in East Anglia, serving over 8,600 young people and their families. Our shared Trust mission of delivering excellence to ensure our young people can thrive and prosper is at the heart of everything we do.

Our trustees fulfil their duties through our Trust Leadership Team, which includes our central team and school leadership teams, working together as one unified organisation with joint accountability. We have an established central team that is not only knowledgeable but also driven by an imperative to deliver the very best for the young people in our care.

At Active Learning Trust, we are restless for excellence and improvement so that our children can thrive and prosper. Deeply rooted in the heart of our communities, people choose to join our trust because we make a difference. We explore the art of the possible to find the right solutions for our children, our people and the wider education sector.

Our Team

Our team is made up of experts across all specialist areas, including education, finance, HR, communications and marketing, estates, governance, procurement, data and IT. Their skills allow us to deliver shared savings and, more importantly, provide essential services to schools, enabling school-based leadership to focus on improving outcomes for pupils in the broadest sense.

- We know our schools exceptionally well and we offer both honest reflection and evaluation of our strengths and areas for improvement.
- We have clear and appropriate plans for continuing to improve the quality of education and pupil achievement.

We encourage and celebrate the individual characteristics of each of our schools and provide them with a good balance of autonomy central oversight and accountability.

Our People-First Philosophy

At Active Learning Trust, we invest in you from day one. We love working with specialists that are united by their skills and passion for shaping the future of education. We provide tailored coaching, leadership training and clear progression pathways that turn roles into fulfilling, lifelong careers. Guided by our values of open dialogue, bold thinking and supportive teamwork, we put your growth and well-being at the heart of everything we do - so you can focus on making a real difference in our schools and beyond.

Our Values

At the heart of our Trust are five core values that shape our culture and guide every aspect of our work. They influence our interactions, decisions and strategic direction, and they unite our school communities.



I aspire, we achieve



We're curious, creative and bold



A family, not a house share



Comfortable being candid



Humour, humility, humanity



ALT creates environments where professionals can be bold and courageous in their practice, bringing about excellent outcomes for both students and staff. Our students receive the best standard of education from practitioners who are motivated to give their best as they are supported by a Trust that treats all with humanity, humility and humour!

More personally, I'm grateful for the CPD and career opportunities presented to me, that have allowed me to grow from an NQT into a Headteacher in 8 years.

Louise Creed
Headteacher, The Albert Pye
and Ravensmere Schools Federation

Job Vacancy

Headteacher - SEN School

Lead a specialist school where every child is known, valued and supported to thrive

We are looking for an exceptional Headteacher to lead Highfield Ely Academy, our specialist academy in Ely for children and young people aged 2-19 with complex special educational needs. This is an opportunity to build on the school's strengths while driving ambitious improvement, ensuring every pupil receives a high-quality, personalised education that helps them achieve their potential. Working closely with colleagues across Active Learning Trust, the successful candidate will provide inspirational leadership for staff, champion inclusive practice, strengthen partnerships with families and professionals, and create a culture of high expectations, collaboration and continuous development for both pupils and employees.

Summary of Key Responsibilities

- Provide strategic leadership, setting a clear vision, culture and direction that drives continuous school improvement.
- Secure high-quality teaching, learning and personalised curriculum provision for pupils with complex SEND needs.
- Lead and develop staff, promoting high standards, wellbeing, professional growth and accountability.
- Ensure exemplary safeguarding, welfare and inclusion, meeting the educational, health and care needs of every pupil.
- Oversee resources, finances and partnerships effectively while maintaining strong accountability to the Trust and stakeholders

Why Join Our Trust?

- Belong to a compassionate and inclusive trust that values you and the role you play.
- Join an experienced group of people that are fully dedicated to delivering the best for our children.
- Gain access to our VivUp employee benefit system, Cycle to Work scheme and local government pension scheme.

Contact

If you would like an informal discussion about the role, or for more info, please contact Duncan Low, Director of Education, at: duncan.low@activelearningtrust.org



Highfield Ely
Academy

Location

Ely, Cambridgeshire

Contract

Full time, Permanent

Salary

Leadership L28 – L34
£100,540 - £116,456

Interviews

W/C 14 September 2026

Start Date

January 2026

Job description

Headteacher - SEN School

Salary: ALT Leadership L28 – L34

Academy Site: Highfield Ely Academy

Reporting to: Head of SENDV

Main purpose

To provide overall strategic leadership and, with others, lead, develop and support the strategic direction, vision, values and priorities of the school. Develop, implement and evaluate the school's policies and practices and manage school resources efficiently and effectively.

To carry out duties in line with the National Standards of excellence for Headteachers, Trust/School policies and procedures and any other relevant legislation or guidance and to demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct provide an environment where teachers' standards and other performance standards can be met.

Duties and responsibilities

- Leadership and management of the school
- Work with the Chief Executive Officer, members of the Executive Leadership Team and Central Trust Team and other stakeholders to establish a culture, ethos and strategic vision which will promote equality, effective collaboration, excellence, and high expectations of all pupils and employees.
- Articulate and model the school's vision and aims, developing and successfully implementing coherent strategic and operational objectives and plans which will empower and motivate others to carry the vision forward and will promote and sustain continuous school improvement.
- Provide dynamic, consistent and motivational leadership to employees, pupils, families and the wider community, acting as a role model to ensure the highest standards are always delivered.
- Ensure that rigorous self-evaluation directly informs school improvement which, in turn, continues to move the school towards an Outstanding Ofsted judgement.

Teaching and Learning

- Work with the CEO, Central Trust Team and other stakeholders to secure and sustain high quality teaching and effective learning across the school, through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education and detailed analysis of pupil progress using a holistic, broad and aspirational range of sources and targets.
- Define, implement and constantly evolve a stimulating and personalised curriculum which engages and motivates pupils who have a wide range of complex educational needs.
- Develop purposeful, focused and aspirational learning environments which offer inclusive opportunities for all pupils, whatever their needs, using all available resources, suitable technologies and other means.
- Establish creative, responsive, effective and stimulating approaches to learning and teaching for pupils with SEND.
- Monitor, evaluate and review classroom practice and promote strategies to support improvement, always aiming for outstanding standards in education.
- Ensure that employees maintain a consistent and continuous focus on pupil assessment and progress, using broad, holistic and rigorous evidence sources to set challenging targets and to monitor, track, evaluate and report upon individual pupil progress.
- Develop an innovative, engaging and exciting range of curriculum enrichment activities to address a range of needs, ensuring inclusivity and equal opportunity for all pupils.
- Ensure that every pupil's needs as highlighted in their EHCP are addressed and met.
- Take the lead in monitoring, evaluating and reviewing health and safety and risk assessments of pupils and contribute to premises risk assessments where required.
- Lead the development, management and resourcing of school policies.
- Work with the Finance Directorate on the formation of the annual budget and on-going financial management to ensure that objectives are achieved.
- Ensure that systems are in place which allow the Trust to fulfil the statutory duties regarding Appraisal. Undertake the performance management of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Work collaboratively within the Trust and a range of external stakeholders to develop and secure school improvement.

Pupil Welfare

- Work with the CEO, Central Trust and other stakeholders to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements and best practice guidance on obligations for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people, particularly those with specific individual needs.
- Develop a positive ethos of mutual respect, care, compassion and tolerance, promoting the wellbeing of all and providing an inclusive and empowering environment.
- Ensure that rigorous safeguarding practice and key legislation is embedded and consistently and relentlessly applied throughout the school – within the core school and within off-site provisions.
- Develop effective systems which promote the highest standards of behaviour and attendance.

- Ensure that the health and care need of each pupil are assessed and consistently met through effective systems and appropriately trained and qualified employees and deliver regular reports to the Central Trust.
- Ensure that all employees, and others working with pupils, are properly appointed and monitored in accordance with school policies, conform to legal requirements from safeguarding procedures, including Safer Recruitment, and receive appropriate induction, training and support so that they recognise their responsibilities regarding Health and Safety and Child Protection/Safeguarding and are able to meet the welfare needs of pupils.
- Ensure regular and appropriate communication and liaison with families and carers, health and social care organisations, education and other professionals involved in pupils' welfare.

Employee Management

- Keep the staffing structure under review to ensure it is appropriate to the needs and circumstances of the school.
- Establish strong working relationships with employees, and provide inspirational leadership, guidance and support.
- Develop and sustain a healthy working environment.
- Ensure that all teaching and support staff are kept fully informed of strategic and operational objectives.
- Implement the Trust's Appraisal policy so that all employees have areas of focus that are clearly linked to the School Improvement Plan and which support them to develop excellent practice.
- Ensure the development and implementation of effective People Directorate policies and procedures for employee induction, professional development and performance review.
- Encourage employees to develop their career skills further by undertaking appropriate professional development and training.
- Ensure a focus on positive employee wellbeing.

Premises, Health & Safety

- Deploy resources effectively to ensure that the school provides a safe working environment and remains an exciting, vibrant place for learning.
- Work with the allocated Trust Estates Officer and School Site Team to ensure that the site and off-site provisions are secure, so that pupils, employees and visitors are always safe.
- Ensure that all Health and Safety legislation is followed, records are kept for inspection by relevant bodies, and actions swiftly realised.
- Ensure that all internal processes are robust, implemented, monitored and reviewed to ensure the safety of pupils, employees and visitors.
- Ensure that buildings are kept in a good condition and that the grounds are kept safe for pupils and all users and are appealing to visitors.

Accountability

- Be accountable to the Head of SENDV and CEO for all aspects of the school's performance. Secure positive, open and collaborative working relationships with the CEO and Head of SENDV to develop a shared vision and clear strategy for the school and take ownership for leading its implementation.

- Provide information to the CEO and relevant members of the Central Team to enable the Trust to meet its statutory obligations and responsibilities to the school and to all its stakeholders.
- Ensure that the school is properly financed and able to meet its statutory obligations, advising the relevant members of the Central Trust Team on the appropriate priorities for expenditure and allocation of funds.
- Continually monitor and review the School Improvement Plan to ensure that it is focused on the appropriate priorities, is up to date and is properly financed.
- Ensure that parents, carers and pupils are kept well-informed regarding the broad curriculum, progress, well-being and all school-related issues which may affect them.
- Present a coherent and accurate account of the school's performance for a range of audiences including the Executive Leadership Team, Trustees, parents and OFSTED.
- Work with the CEO and relevant members of the Central Trust Team to regularly review own practice, set personal targets and take responsibility for own development.

Additional Duties

The post holder will:

- Contribute to and uphold the overall ethos/work/aims of the Trust
- Act with professionalism, integrity
- Promote and adhere to high standards of behaviour and performance in line with the employee code of conduct, Nolan Principles and other relevant policies and professional standards.
- Establish constructive relationships and communicate professionally and effectively with senior leaders, colleagues, the Trust/school community, contractors and other agencies/ professionals
- Participate in training and other learning activities and performance appraisal/development as required
- Recognise own strengths and areas of expertise and use these to advise and support others
- Comply with any reasonable request to undertake work that is not specified in this job description which is commensurate with the post holder's salary grade, abilities and aptitudes
- Undertake duties in line with the Trust's policy on equality and be sensitive and caring to the needs of the disadvantaged, promoting a positive approach to a harmonious working environment. Act as an exemplar on these issues and identify and monitor training for themselves and any employees for whom they are responsible, in line with this policy, the Equality Standard and obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Carry out their responsibilities with due regard to Trust policies and arrangements relating to safeguarding and child protection, health and safety, security, confidentiality and data protection and should report any concerns to an appropriate person

Generic responsibilities of all Active Learning Trust employees

- To consistently uphold the Trust's Aims, Visions and Values.
- To work in a co-operative and polite manner with all stakeholders and visitors to promote and enhance the reputation of the academies and Trust.

- To work with children and young people within the framework of the academy in a courteous, positive, caring, and responsive manner.
- To take an active and positive role in the Trust's commitment to the development of staff and review procedures, undertaking training as required.
- To act in a professional way that is consistent with the values and expectations of the Trust.
- To be responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young persons.

The Active Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We expect all staff to actively share this commitment. All adults working in our Trust in whatever capacity will be part of a thorough safer recruitment process. All appointments will be subject pre-employment checks including the taking of satisfactory references and enhanced criminal record clearance (via the Disclosure and Barring Service) in line with the need to create and maintain a safe culture.

Please note that this is illustrative of the general nature and level of responsibility of the role. It is not a comprehensive list of all tasks expected to be carried out. It will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the appraisal process and planning for the next academic year. It will be reviewed, and it may be subject to modification or amendment at any time after consultation with the holder of the post. The duties may be varied to meet the changing demands of the Trust at the reasonable discretion of the Reports to Manager.

Person Specification

Headteacher - SEN School

E = Essential / **D** = Desirable

Qualifications & Training		
Qualified teaching status	E	
Educated to degree level or equivalent	E	
NPQH, NPQSL or other additional school leadership qualification. An additional specialist qualification in SEND		D
Evidence of recent professional development at a senior leadership level.	E	
Evidence of recent relevant professional development and training, including in safeguarding and financial management.	E	
Commitment to further develop own professional knowledge and skills.	E	
Recent training as Designated Safeguarding Lead		D
Experience		
Experienced as an Appraiser	E	
Successful experience of monitoring, evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning in a special school.	E	
Proven record of successful leadership at a senior level in special education.	E	
Substantial experience in a SEND environment.	E	
Experience of working in collaboration and/or partnership with Governors and/or Trustees, internal and external stakeholders, other educational bodies and the wider community to develop positive relationships and achieve strategic objectives.	E	

Proven track record of managing school self- evaluation and the ability to lead whole school improvement initiatives, which have a positive impact on pupil achievement.	E	
A highly visible style of leadership with the charisma and enthusiasm to inspire the whole school community and the ability to manage every aspect of the school.	E	
Successful experience of effective strategic, financial and resource management to achieve educational priorities and ensure value for money.	E	

Skills and Knowledge		
Knowledge and understanding of Special Educational Needs.	E	
Knowledge and understanding of effective teaching and learning for pupils with special needs and the ability to promote high expectations for pupil outcomes throughout the school.	E	
In-depth knowledge and experience of Child Protection, Safeguarding & Safer Recruitment procedures.	E	
A thorough understanding of the Special Needs Code of Practice and its implications for pupils and families.	E	
In-depth knowledge and understanding of the wider educational agenda, including current national policies and educational developments and statutory requirements.	E	
A sound understanding of school/trust governance	E	
A clear understanding of performance management of staff and the capability and competence processes for teachers.	E	
Excellent communication skills, both written and oral	E	
Good interpersonal skills with the ability and experience to motivate others	E	
Ability to work effectively with other services to support pupil achievement.	E	
Up to date knowledge of pedagogy and a sound understanding of research in this area	E	
The ability to develop effective partnerships and networks	E	
A thorough understanding of effective curriculum design	E	
Ability to work as part of a team and on own initiative	E	

The capacity to develop in partnership with all stakeholders a vision and strategy for the future.	E	
The ability to work collaboratively with other schools and agencies to develop partnerships, learning networks and employers.	E	
Commitment to equal opportunities, inclusion, diversity and access for all to ensure an open and transparent school culture.	E	
The ability to develop innovative ideas in a school environment and drive them through to action.	E	
Ability to identify professional development needs of all staff through performance appraisal and assessment and to promote professional	E	
Ability to use data analysis to help secure school improvement	E	
Sound judgement and decision maker – confident in using own initiative	E	

Personal Qualities		
Embodies of the Active Learning Trust's values: - I aspire, we achieve - We're curious, creative and bold - A family, not a house share - Comfortable being candid - Humour, humility, humanity	E	
Commitment to uphold the seven principles of public life (the Nolan principles) at all times	E	
Commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times	E	
An understanding of up-to-date safeguarding requirements including all aspects of safer recruitment	E	
Personally resilient—able to deal with the challenges of the role and identify and seek support required.	E	
Receptive to change and innovation.	E	
Able to travel between school and Trust sites.	E	
Equal Opportunities		
Commitment to inclusion, equality and diversity	E	
Safeguarding		
Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.	E	

Application Process

How to Apply

You can browse and apply for all Active Learning Trust vacancies by clicking the link below to access our recruitment platform. Once you have found the corresponding vacancy, click on the 'Apply Now' button to begin your application. You can save your application and return to it at any time. Please ensure you have completed and submitted your application before the deadline shown on the job advert.

[View current vacancies](#)

Hints and Tips

To increase the chance of your application being considered for the role, please follow these steps:

- Use the Person Specification document to write your application. Consider using the headings and give examples where possible.
- Check for punctuation and grammar errors.
- Ensure your first referee is from your current or most recent employer. If you are employed within a school or academy, ensure you list your Headteacher as your first referee.
- All gaps in employment history must be explained. This should start from the date you left full-time education, including the summer holiday.



Useful Information

As an equal opportunities employer, we welcome applications irrespective of race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation and/or age. We value the individuality and creativity that every worker potentially brings to the workforce.

No CVs are accepted in line with requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, therefore all applications are required to be completed using the MyNewTerm platform.

The Active Learning Trust reserves the right to interview and appoint prior to the advert closing date. With this in mind, we encourage you to apply as soon as possible.

The Active Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. We expect all staff to actively share this commitment. All adults working in our Trust in whatever capacity will be part of a thorough safer recruitment process. All appointments will be subject to pre-employment checks including the taking of satisfactory references and enhanced criminal record clearance in line with the need to create and maintain a safe culture. Please be advised that references may be requested prior to interview for roles within our academies, where permission has been given to do so via MyNewTerm.

Candidates are advised that, if shortlisted for interview, they will be subject to an online search of information in the public domain.

This post will come under the requirements of the Childcare (Disqualification) 2009 Regulations and the successful applicant will be required to complete a declaration form to establish whether they are disqualified under these regulations.



www.highfieldschoolely.co.uk