



CONNECT
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

Recruitment and Selection Policy

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Recruitment and Selection Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The aim of this Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure is to attract, select and retain staff who will successfully and positively contribute to the work and development of Connect Multi-Academy Trust (the 'Trust').
- 1.2 In addition, this policy and procedure aim to ensure that the Trust recruits and selects staff in a safe and fair manner at all times. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people are integral requirements in recruitment and selection processes and are an essential part of creating safe environments for children and young people.
- 1.3 It is also imperative that recruitment is planned and conducted with due regard to equality legislation and to ensure appointments are made on merit. However, recruitment processes will also be designed to attract suitable applicants within difficult labour markets, will consider the use of a wide range of attraction techniques and make appropriate use of the discretions within the Trust's Pay Policy.

2. Recruitment and selection policy statement

- 2.1 This Trust is committed to attracting, selecting, vetting and retaining employees who will successfully and positively contribute to its schools and students ensuring that they achieve their full potential. A motivated and committed workforce with appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and ability to do the job is critical to the performance and success of the Trust and its schools and is fundamental to the delivery of high-quality educational services.
- 2.2 This policy seeks to ensure that the Trust demonstrates good practice regarding keeping children safe in education, with the aim of deterring and preventing people who are unsuitable to work with children from applying for or securing employment within the Trust. It will do this by basing its recruitment and selection procedures on the prevailing statutory guidance and recommended practice on safer recruitment and reviewing these as and when guidelines and practices change.
- 2.3 This Trust has adopted the following statement which details its safeguarding commitment and will be included in relevant recruitment documentation:

Connect Multi-Academy Trust is legally obligated to process a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before making appointments to relevant posts. The DBS check will reveal both spent and unspent convictions, cautions, and bind-overs as well as pending prosecutions, which aren't 'protected' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and check to establish that a person is not barred from 'regulated activity' as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy will apply to the appointment of all roles within the Trust, be they permanent, temporary or casual, and sets out the standards and stages for all recruitment activities. The safer recruitment principles of the policy should also be applied to the appointment and vetting of volunteers to ensure they are in appropriate placements and are suitable to work with children. Supervised volunteers do not require a barred list check as they are not in regulated activity.
- 3.2 The policy applies to all individuals involved in the recruitment process including members of the Academy Trust Board (the ATB), sub-committees of the ATB and local Academy Committees. Those involved at each stage of the recruitment process will demonstrate a professional approach by dealing honestly, efficiently and fairly with all internal and external applicants in line with the principles of public life.
- 3.3 The Trust will ensure it complies with statutory and recommended practice guidance around recruitment to all posts, including in the appointment of senior leadership roles. This includes Part 3: Safer Recruitment contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and the requirement to undertake a range of statutory pre-employment vetting checks on all staff as required by the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and as amended.
- 3.4 The relevant authority to appoint employees to the Trust is detailed in the Scheme of Delegation.

4. Equal opportunities

- 4.1 This Trust is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all and ensuring that all stages of the recruitment and selection process are free from unlawful discrimination and bias. Recruitment and selection procedures may be monitored to ensure that applicants are not being discriminated against on the grounds of any protected characteristic; sex, race, disability, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity.
- 4.2 All reasonable steps will be taken to remove bias and discrimination from each stage of the recruitment and selection process. Applicants will be asked what adjustments they might require to participate in all stages of the recruitment and selection process and every effort will be made accommodate any reasonable adjustments.
- 4.3 Further information is available in the Trust's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

5. Safer recruitment

- 5.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral part of the recruitment and selection process. Through each stage of this process the Trust will seek to deter and reject those applicants whom it considers unsuitable to work with children and young people, and prevent them from entering the workforce.

5.2 To this end the following measures will be taken through the recruitment process:

- Information on the Trust's commitment to safeguarding children will be included in relevant recruitment documentation
- At least one member of every selection event will have successfully completed accredited Safer Recruitment Training prior to the start of the recruitment process
- Comprehensive information will be obtained from all applicants which will be scrutinised for any discrepancies or anomalies, including gaps in employment and education, which will be investigated
- Shortlisted applicants will be asked to make a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that may make them unsuitable to work with children
- The Trust will carry out online searches on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online which may be explored with the applicant at interview
- At the selection stage, the suitability and motivation of all applicants to work with children will be explored
- Robust, relevant and appropriate references that fully cover the candidate's recent work history will be obtained
- Appointing officers are required to complete a Safer Recruitment Checklist before a conditional offer is confirmed in writing
- Satisfactory statutory clearances will be obtained prior to the candidate commencing in post, except in exceptional circumstances and with an appropriate risk assessment

5.3 At all times the Trust will adhere to the legislative data protection requirements. All information gathered during the recruitment and selection process will be treated confidentially and handled and stored securely. Information collected in relation to successful applicants will be retained on their confidential employee file.

5.4 Application and assessment data for unsuccessful applicants will be held in line with the timescales set out in the Trust's Data Retention Policy and Schedule and will then be confidentially destroyed or deleted.

6. Disclosure and Barring Service conviction information

6.1 Criminal conviction information and DBS disclosures will be requested for all employees and roles within the Trust as they are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the Exceptions Order 1975, as amended, applies.

6.2 Applicants for roles with the Trust will only be asked to declare any relevant conviction information if they are selected for interview.

6.3 The Trust will treat conviction information in the strictest confidence as it is sensitive personal data. Such information will only be used, stored, retained and destroyed in line with the DBS Code of Practice and the Trust's policies on data protection and retention.

6.4 The Trust has adopted a policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders which is available at appendix 1 of the Recruitment and Selection Procedure.

6.5 All employees of the Trust are considered to be in regulated activity so a check will be made that they are not on the Children's Barred List.

7. Individuals involved in the recruitment process

7.1 Where possible, the same individuals will be involved throughout the whole recruitment and selection process i.e. planning, shortlisting and interviewing.

7.2 The shortlisting and selection panel will consist of at least two members but may have more depending on the post being filled. The members of the panel will have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointments and be appropriately trained (see paragraph 5.2 above).

7.3 Where a candidate is known to a member of the selection panel, either personally or professionally, it should be declared when shortlisting takes place. All applicants must be considered on merit and it is, therefore, important to ensure there is no conflict of interest or perception of unfair advantage for any particular applicant. Where a potential conflict of interest or previous association has been declared, consideration will be given to changing the selection panel or adding additional members. Further guidance regarding relationships is available in the Trust's Code of Conduct.

8. Single Central Record

8.1 Each school will maintain a single central record (SCR) of the pre-employment checks undertaken for staff working within that school. In addition, each school SCR will contain details of the checks undertaken for members of their Academy Committee and employees of the central team who may work at that school. All school SCRs will also contain details of the checks undertaken on trustees and members of the Trust.

8.2 The SCR will be held confidentially with only named authorised officers being able to access it. The SCR is a live document and will be updated when staff leave or new starters commence. Where permissible under legislation, copies of documents used to confirm pre-employment checks will be retained on the employee's personal record.

8.3 Whilst the day-to-day maintenance of the SCR may be delegated to administrative staff, the Headteacher retains responsibility for it. Regular audits of the SCR will be undertaken by the Headteacher and/or a member of the HR team. Where the most senior member of staff in a school is the Executive Headteacher or Head of School then they will assume the responsibilities of the Headteacher.

9. Section 128 prohibition directions

9.1 Section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 provides the Secretary of State for Education with the power to issue a direction prohibiting an unsuitable

individual from participating in the management of an independent educational institution, which includes academies.

9.2 The Trust has identified the following roles involved in the management of the Trust and its school for whom a Section 128 check will be undertaken:

- Chief Executive Officer
- Headteachers including Executive Headteachers and Heads of School
- Deputy Headteachers
- Assistant Headteachers
- Chief Operating Officer
- Corporate Director

9.3 A Section 128 check may also be undertaken on new or amended roles which are considered as participating in the management of the Trust or its schools and this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

9.4 A Section 128 check will also be undertaken on all governors, Trustees and members. This may include staff governors who do not require the check in their substantive role.

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure details the stages within the recruitment and selection process and provides guidance based on legislative requirements and recommended practice. The Trust recognises that fair and robust recruitment practices are critical in achieving successful recruitment outcomes and contributing to the maintenance of a safer culture.

2. Planning

- 2.1 Planning the recruitment and selection process is essential to maximise the opportunity for the Trust to attract applicants with the right skills, experience and values and minimise the risk of making unsuitable appointments.
- 2.2 Prior to taking the decision to advertise, the Trust will consider whether there is a need to replace the role on the same basis. The main options which can be considered are:
- Replacement on a 'like for like' basis
 - Appointment of an apprentice
 - Whether this provides an opportunity to review the staffing structure or redistribute work to other existing employees. Where this option is considered there will be appropriate discussion and consultation with affected staff and the impact on pay and grading will be reviewed.
- 2.3 Changes to the staffing establishment will be approved through the vacancy control process and implemented in a way which gives consideration to the health and wellbeing of those affected. The decision not to replace a role on the same basis may negate or reduce the need for future staffing reductions.
- 2.4 Once the proposal to recruit has been approved, a range of planning activities and decisions may be undertaken including agreeing those involved in the process, defining the job role and the selection criteria to be used, preparing recruitment documentation and setting the timetable for recruitment.

3. Job Description and Person Specification

- 3.1 The job description and person specification are essential tools and will be used throughout the recruitment and selection process.
- 3.2 A job description will be provided for all posts which sets out the main duties and responsibilities of the post. The person specification will detail the skills, knowledge, experience, behaviours and attitudes required to do it. The job description and person specification will also detail the safeguarding requirements of the role and the extent to which the role will include contact with children and young people.

3.3 Whenever a new non-teaching post is introduced, it will be benchmarked against other similar posts within the Trust and/or evaluated under the Trust's job evaluation scheme.

4. Attraction

4.1 As a minimum, all posts will be advertised internally in the school in which they arise, and across the Trust and/or externally where appropriate. Those on parental leave and long-term sick leave should be made aware of how to access vacancies which arise during their absence, if appropriate. Where posts are advertised externally this may be on relevant websites and in relevant additional media as appropriate.

4.2 In exceptional circumstances, a post may not be advertised. This determination will be made by Human Resources through the vacancy control process. This will usually only be for one of the following reasons:

- As a result of internal restructuring where an existing member of staff is at risk of redundancy
- Where it is necessary to redeploy an existing employee for health reasons where they are unable to continue in their substantive position
- Because a similar post has recently been advertised and an appointment can be made from the subsequent interviews (usually within 6 months of interview)
- Because a fixed term or temporary appointment needs to be made as soon as possible to ensure continuity within the post, such as covering a long-term period of sickness absence
- Where the opportunity is for a temporary responsibility (e.g. a TLR) which an existing employee will undertake in addition to their substantive post
- As a result of redeployment from another school within the Trust

4.3 Where the need for a fixed term post or temporary responsibility becomes a permanent one, the authorised recruiter (see paragraph 3.4 of the Policy), in consultation with HR, will consider whether it is appropriate for the post-holder to be offered the permanent contract or whether the post should be advertised. This will depend on the original reason for the post initially being fixed-term, any accrued employment rights, any subsequent changes in the needs of the school and Trust and the original recruitment process that was undertaken.

Adverts

4.4 The following minimum information will usually be included in adverts:

- Job title
- Salary – including pro-rata values if part-time or term-time only
- Hours of work and whether the role is full or part-time
- Proposed start date
- Whether the post is temporary or permanent
- Summary of the job role and minimum requirements
- How to make an application and the closing date

- Information regarding the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- The safeguarding responsibilities of the post
- That safeguarding checks will be undertaken for the successful candidate including obtaining a satisfactory enhanced DBS check for work with children
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and that the Exceptions Order 1975 (as amended) applies

4.5 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, vacancies will be advertised for at least one week, including one weekend, to give applicants sufficient time to apply.

Online Application Form

4.6 All applicants for posts advertised externally must make an online application through the Trust's applicant tracking system. The use of a standard online application ensures that a common set of core data is obtained from all applicants.

4.7 The online application will require the applicant to provide a range of personal, educational and employment details. Applicants must also provide a statement of their personal qualities and experience and how they meet the person specification. Applicants are required to sign a declaration that they understand it is an offence to apply for the role if they are barred from engaging in regulated activity with children.

4.8 All candidates are required to electronically sign their online application.

Application Information

4.9 For all posts advertised externally, the Trust will publish information about the role which is accessible for all candidates. The Trust recognises that this information is critical in encouraging candidates to apply for the post and provides detail regarding the vision and strategy of the Trust and the individual school.

4.10 Application information will also detail the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and that the successful candidate will be required to obtain a satisfactory enhanced DBS check. The Trust will include in the information for applicants, links to the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy.

5. Shortlisting

5.1 Shortlisting will be undertaken by a minimum of two people, who will usually be those involved in the interview and selection processes. Applications for shortlisting will be anonymised, with all personal and equality information removed, where possible.

5.2 Applications will be scrutinised carefully to ensure they are fully and properly completed. Particular attention will be paid to the reasons for leaving any

previous childcare employment where the applicant no longer works with children.

- 5.3 Any gaps in employment and education will be identified and a written explanation obtained from the applicant.
- 5.4 Candidates will be assessed equally against the job description and person specification according to the agreed criteria and a record of this assessment will be made.
- 5.5 Candidates who do not meet the essential requirements should not be shortlisted. Where it is not possible to determine, from the application form, whether a candidate fully meets a criterion they may be progressed to the shortlist and further evidence must be sought through the selection process.
- 5.6 If, following assessment against the essential criteria, the short-list is too long, the desirable criteria may be used to reduce the shortlist to a manageable size. A record will be kept of the shortlisting process.
- 5.7 Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend the selection process. The interview notification will detail the relevant arrangements, the selection activities and who will be involved from the Trust.
- 5.8 At this point, candidates will be asked to make a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that may make them unsuitable to work with children. Disclosure enables candidates to share relevant information and allows this to be discussed and considered at interview before a DBS certificate is received.
- 5.9 Candidates will only be asked to declare cautions and convictions which could appear on a DBS disclosure certificate and will not be required to declare protected convictions and cautions which have been filtered.
- 5.10 An online search will be undertaken for all shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available. Candidates will be notified that this check is taking place.
- 5.11 Information disclosed during the self-declaration process or identified through an online search should be discussed at interview. Where a shortlisted applicant discloses information which would make it unlawful for the school to employ that individual, they will be immediately withdrawn from the process.
- 5.12 The applicant may be asked to bring relevant identity and qualification documentation to the interview to enable the Trust to undertake relevant vetting checks.

Employment References

- 5.13 Employment references for shortlisted candidates will generally be requested prior to interview, where applicants provide permission for the Trust to do so. This enables information to be shared in advance with the selection panel and discussed with the candidate.

- 5.14 The Trust will seek to obtain a minimum of two written references directly from referees. Referees should be able to comment on the applicant's suitability for the role being recruited to and one must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer where they have been in employment. Referees will be asked for information regarding the applicant's suitability to work with children including any substantiated safeguarding concerns/allegations.
- 5.15 Where the referee is school based, the Headteacher/Principal will be asked to confirm if the reference is accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations.
- 5.16 Where an applicant previously worked in childcare employment but no longer does so, they will be required to provide a referee from that organisation.
- 5.17 Additional checks may be taken to ensure the legitimacy of references and referees including where these have been obtained electronically.
- 5.18 Information included in references will be checked for consistency with information provided by the candidate and obtained through the assessment and appointment process.
- 5.19 Where completed references are not available when the appointment decision is made, the appointing officer should check that satisfactory references are received before an unconditional offer of employment is made.

6. Assessment

- 6.1 As a minimum the selection process will be based on completion of an application, shortlisting and face-to-face interview with at least two interviewers. The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the agreed criteria based on the job description and person specification and explore their suitability to work with children and young people. They will also be asked how they will support the Trust's values.
- 6.2 Other selection methods may be used depending on the role that is being recruited. Any methods used must be relevant to the post being appointed to and free from bias and unlawful discrimination.
- 6.3 Panel members should:
- Consider the issues to be explored with each candidate, including any issues, inconsistencies or gaps identified from the application form, the references and the self-declaration forms, and who will ask about each of those
 - Agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the job description and person specification including the core questions which all candidates will be asked
 - Agree the questions which will be asked regarding suitability and motivation to work with children, attitude towards safeguarding, what attracted them to the post and how they will support the Trust's values
 - Receive feedback from other activities which have formed part of the selection process and agree what weight will be given to these

6.4 Individual candidates will be assessed against the agreed assessment criteria and these assessments recorded in writing.

7. Selection

7.1 Once the formal assessment process is completed, all members of the selection panel will reach a final decision. The selection will be made on the basis of which individual best fits the criteria set at the start of the recruitment process, using the scores and results of any assessments. A written record of the selection decision will be made.

7.2 The Trust may choose not to appoint should none of the candidates meet the required standard.

7.3 All candidates who have attended the assessment process should be notified of the outcome of the process. Unsuccessful candidates will be offered feedback should they wish to receive this.

8. Conditional offer of employment

8.1 All offers of employment will be made on a conditional basis subject to:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory and relevant written references
- A written record of the candidate's full educational and employment history included documented reasons for any gaps
- Verification of the candidate's identity, including current address and checking the name on the birth certificate where this is available
- Verification of eligibility to work in the UK
- Verification of the candidate's mental and physical fitness to undertake the duties of the role, with reasonable adjustments if applicable
- Verification of educational and professional qualifications
- A satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record check for work with children, with Children's Barred List check
- Overseas criminal records check or certificate of good conduct (if applicable)
- (for roles in relevant childcare) A declaration regarding whether they are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006
- (for teaching posts) Letter of professional standing from the relevant regulatory authority where the applicant has worked overseas as a teacher (if applicable)
- (for teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period if relevant (applicable to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)
- (for those undertaking teaching work) confirmation that the candidate is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State or has any current sanctions or restriction imposed (including any legacy GTCE sanctions)
- Section 128 check for those taking up a relevant management position

8.2 New employees will usually not commence until the satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. A member of staff may only commence prior to the

return of the DBS criminal records check with the express permission of Human Resources and under a documented risk assessment which should be reviewed at least every two weeks. In such cases, a separate check will be made of the Children's Barred List prior to commencement.

- 8.3 If a DBS disclosure contains any information, which may or may not have been disclosed through the selection process, final appointment approval must be sought from Human Resources. Where appropriate, a documented risk assessment will be undertaken and discussed with the applicant.
- 8.4 Where a candidate has not disclosed relevant information in the course of the self-declaration process, which is revealed when the DBS disclosure is issued, further discussion will be held with the candidate prior to an employment decision being reached. The Trust's policy on the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders policy is available at appendix 1.
- 8.5 All pre-employment vetting checks will be followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided and a written record made of the outcome.



Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy

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Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy Statement

1. Connect Multi-Academy Trust (The Trust) is an organisation which assesses the suitability of applicants for employment using criminal record checks processed through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
2. All positions working for the Trust are covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) order 1975 as amended. Therefore, a satisfactory enhanced DBS with barred list check for work with children, will be required for all new employees of the Trust. The Trust will only ask an individual to provide details of convictions and cautions that it is legally entitled to know about; that is convictions and cautions that are not protected.
3. The Trust has this written policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders, which is available to all applicants at the outset of the recruitment process. Applicant information will also confirm that all roles working for the Trust are covered by the Exceptions Order and that a DBS certificate will be requested in the event of the individual being offered employment.
4. The Trust complies with the DBS Code of Practice and a copy of this is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-code-of-practice>. Through this policy the Trust will make every subject of a criminal record check submitted to the DBS aware of the code and how to access it.
5. The Trust is committed to the fair treatment of its staff and potential staff, regardless of any protected characteristic or offending background, unless statutory exclusions apply. The Trust actively promotes equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and welcomes applications from a wide range of candidates, including those with criminal records.
6. Candidates are selected for interview based on their skills, qualifications and experience and criminal record information is only requested from short-listed candidates.
7. An application for a criminal record check is only submitted to the DBS for those to whom a conditional offer of employment with the Trust has been made.
8. Every interview panel has a member trained in safer recruitment which includes assessing the relevance and circumstances of offences and training in the relevant legislation relating to the employment of ex-offenders, e.g. the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
9. At interview, or in a separate discussion, the Trust ensures that an open and measured discussion takes place on the subject of any offences or other matter which the candidate has declared and that might be relevant to the position. Failure to reveal information that is directly relevant to the position sought could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment if it is later comes to light including on a DBS certificate.
10. There are some convictions, called relevant offences, which may lead to the person being barred from working with children and prevent them from working for the Trust. Where such convictions are declared or revealed through the

DBS certificate the applicant will be rejected from any further involvement in the recruitment process. Where the individual has potentially committed an offence in applying to work with children the matter will be reported to the Police and the Disclosure and Barring Service.

11. For all other offences, the Trust undertakes to discuss any matter revealed on a DBS certificate with the individual seeking the position before making an employment decision or withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
12. When assessing an applicant's criminal history, the Trust will consider the offence in terms of:
 - Nature, seriousness and relevance
 - Whether the offence would be protected / filtered
 - How long ago it occurred
 - Whether it was a one-off or part of a history
 - The circumstances of it being committed
 - Any changes in the applicant's personal circumstances
 - The country of conviction
 - Decriminalisation
13. The decision making process will be appropriately documented paying due regard to the restrictions on the retention of conviction information within the DBS Code of Practice.
14. If the decision is made to proceed with the appointment a documented risk assessment may be put in place which will be shared with the individual. Final appointment approval must be sought from Human Resources before any unconditional offer is confirmed (please see the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure).