



## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY**

In its recruitment practices, the Willow Learning Trust will treat all potential employees with dignity and respect.

The recruitment process will promote and value: equality, inclusion and diversity of individuals of all backgrounds and by doing so, appoint the best person for the job and build a community reflective of the diversity of all stakeholders.

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Willow Learning Trust recognises that staff are its most important and valued asset and that the capability and high standards of individual members of staff are vital for schools within the Trust to achieve their objectives. This policy sets out processes and guidelines for carrying out recruitment and selection so that the best person for the job is appointed. Following the procedure and guidelines will ensure that Headteachers and members of appointment panels have prepared thoroughly for the selection decision and are in a position to make objective judgements, whilst ensuring that they comply with relevant legislation.
- 1.2 The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The principles of Safer Recruitment will be followed throughout our Recruitment and Selection procedures. Further details can be found in the latest version of "Keeping Children Safe in Education"
- 1.3 The Trust also believes in promoting diversity and inclusivity, ensuring that difference is recognised and celebrated within the context of fairness and equality. In this respect it is imperative that recruitment decisions and procedures are given the priority they deserve. The procedure aims to ensure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, gender, caring responsibilities, disability, gender and gender re-assignment, age, social class, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
- 1.4 The general principles of the procedure apply to recruitment of all staff, both teaching and support staff.
- 1.5 Headteacher must seek the permission of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the Trust Personnel Committee before commencing recruitment procedures for additional staff to the agreed Shadow Staffing structure.
- 1.6 The Headteacher of the relevant school will normally lead the process of making staff appointments. However, in some cases this may be delegated.

- 1.7 In the case of a Senior Leadership appointment, the relevant Headteacher will lead the appointment process assisted by the CEO and Chair of Local Governing Body or a Trustee.
- 1.8 In the case of a Headteacher appointment, the CEO will lead the appointment process assisted by a panel of 2 Trustees and 2 Governors.
- 1.9 The Chair of the appointment panel is responsible for the implementation of the procedure. No individual should have sole responsibility for the selection decision and therefore there should normally be a panel of between 2 and 5 people. For most appointments, the panel will consist of the Headteacher and the relevant Subject Leader/Key Stage Leader/Line Manager. For SLT appointments, members of the Local Governing Body and/or Trustees will also be present. At least one member of each appointment panel must have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training. Training is made available to Governors, Trustees and staff involved in recruitment and selection and they are actively encouraged to undertake such training.

## **2. Recruitment Arrangements**

- 2.1 When a vacancy arises the appointment panel (see above) will be set up. For teaching appointments and senior administrative posts, the panel may comprise the Headteacher or Deputy, and appropriate staff members. For Senior Leadership appointments, the panel will comprise the Headteacher, CEO, the Chair of the LGB or a Trustee. The CEO with the Chair of the LGB will lead the process for a Headteacher appointments and the Chair of Trustees will lead the process for CEO appointments. For non-teaching appointments the panel composition will be determined according to the nature of the post. The school HR Lead will draw up a timetable for the recruitment process, in consultation with the Headteacher or Chair of the Panel.

## **3. Relationships between panel members and applicants**

- 3.1 Panel members should not be involved in the decision of appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship with them outside work.

## **4. Defining the Job and Person Required**

- 4.1 All jobs must have a job description and person specification, which comply with the Trust and individual school equality, diversity and inclusion policies. As soon as a vacancy arises the job description and person specification will be drawn up/revised.
- 4.2 The panel will use the person specification for the following process:
  - To write the advertisement
  - To shortlist suitable applicants
  - To devise suitable assessments for shortlisted applicants
  - To draw up questions for the panel to ask applicants at interview

The person specification is a list of carefully considered and justifiable criteria, which identify the skills, knowledge, abilities, aptitudes and qualifications or experience, required to carry out the duties of the post effectively. This is a key tool in the recruitment and selection

procedure as it provides the appointment panel with the yardstick against which to measure the candidates. Great care will be taken to ensure that the criteria are accurate, fair and justifiable. They will not contain any directly or indirectly discriminatory requirements.

- 4.3 Not all criteria are of equal importance. Essential and desirable criteria will be identified on the person specification to facilitate shortlisting. All applicants for interview will be selected against the essential criteria, the meeting of which can be ascertained from the application form. If there are too many people to interview, then a second sift may be done using the desirable criteria.
- 4.4 The Department of Education introduced professional standards for teachers and some other categories of school staff and these standards will inform the person specification.
- 4.5 A commitment to equal opportunities and to work within the relevant school's safeguarding procedures are core requirements, which will be included in every person specification.
- 4.6 Safeguarding the welfare of students is a core requirement for every post in the school. Therefore, in addition to setting out the duties and responsibilities of the post the job description must:
  - set out the extent of the relationship with, and degree of responsibility for, the students with whom the postholder will have contact, and
  - state that the individual is responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of students for whom they have responsibility or with whom they come into contact.

In addition to setting out the qualifications, experience and skills/competences required for the role the person specification must make clear that the person appointed must be suitable to work with children:

- wider safeguarding responsibilities and the need to work within the relevant school's Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy are essential requirements.
- 4.7 The panel will decide what evidence they will require to assess whether the applicants meet the criteria, i.e. by application form, interview, observation, assessment etc (further information on this can be found under the selection process). If it is appropriate, assessments may be used as part of the application process to assist shortlisting. As part of the information sent to candidates, they must be informed that in addition to assessing their ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students including:
    - motivation to work with students
    - ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with students
    - emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours
    - attitudes to the use of authority and maintaining discipline.

Candidates should also be informed that, if shortlisted, any relevant issues arising out of his or her references will be taken up at the interview (as per: Keeping Children Safe in Education)

- 4.8 The Chair of the panel has the responsibility for ensuring that the rest of the panel fully understand and agree with the meaning of the criteria, the rationale behind the priorities and the sorts of evidence or examples that they will be looking for when selecting.

## **5. Applications**

- 5.1 In preparing a pack to send to applicants the HR Lead will ensure that there is enough information for the applicant to decide if they want to work in the school and if they really are suitable for the job. The pack should serve as both a marketing tool and as a means of filtering out unsuitable applications through self-selection. A typical pack would include the following items:

- Job description
- Person specification
- Details of pay and grading for the post
- Application form
- Information about the school and relevant department
- Ethnic monitoring form

- 5.2 For the majority of vacancies applicants must complete a standard application form (paper or electronic) and detailed guidance will be provided. A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, and part-time and voluntary work as well as full-time employment, with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment, with start and end dates, and reasons for leaving employment.

The application form will include an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Any disclosure that is 'protected' cannot be taken into account during the selection process, guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-filtering-guidance/dbs-filtering-guide>.

It should require a signed statement that the person is not on the Barred List, disqualified from work with children, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, and either has no convictions, cautions or bind-overs, or has attached details of their record in a sealed envelope marked confidential. In addition, the applicant should declare if they have been subject to any disciplinary offences relating to children, including any for which the penalty is time expired. Successful applicants will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS disclosure through the Trust or give permission for the Trust to view their on-line check before commencement of their employment.

Provision will be made for the acceptance of applications in alternative formats, where appropriate. For example, information can be received on audiotape, typed on a separate

sheet, or completed on behalf of the applicant. CVs will not be accepted as they will not address the person specification, and under Safer Recruitment practices there is a danger that relevant details may be omitted. Application forms will advise applicants that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected, summary dismissal and possible referral to the relevant authorities.

- 5.3 Application forms will be kept for a minimum of 6 months. The equalities data will be removed prior to the shortlisting stage and kept separately.

## **6. Advertising**

- 6.1 All permanent vacancies for Headteachers and CEO will be advertised nationally. Fixed term contracts may be offered to internal candidates in emergency situations.

All other vacancies will be advertised either internally and/or externally in order to attract and appoint the best person for the job from a wide range of different groups within the community.

- 6.2 All advertisements will include a statement that "The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment".

- 6.3 In certain circumstances, where there are hard-to-fill posts where previous advertising has been unsuccessful, the use of recruitment agencies, or the equivalent, to provide shortlists for selection to temporary or permanent appointments may be used. Any agency used will have an equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion policy, will provide full vetting details including safer recruitment checks, DBS, evidence of right to work and photo ID. Agencies must ensure that their monitoring data is open to inspection, their advertisements for our jobs includes the school's equal opportunities statement, and they have a quality control system which ensures that the procedures they claim to have are actually followed. Where possible, several agencies should submit applicants who can then be shortlisted by the panel in the usual way. The use of search and selection agencies is permissible in the above circumstances.

## **7. Shortlisting**

- 7.1 Once the closing date has passed, the applications will be circulated to the panel for review and a shortlist recommended, the Headteacher will review recommendations and make the final shortlist. In the case of shortlisting for Headteacher, CEO posts, the CEO/Chair of Trustees will arrange a meeting with the panel members and agree a shortlist.

The HR Lead will manage the shortlisting process in consultation with the Headteacher, CEO or Chair of Trustees as appropriate. At least two members of the panel must be involved in creating the shortlist, including the Chair of the panel. Applicants should be assessed on those criteria assessable from the application form, or equivalent format, using essential criteria for the first sift.

- 7.2 Each application should be read and assessed to ascertain whether the applicant meets each of the criteria. Decisions should be recorded.
- 7.3 Any applicant who indicates a disability on their application form and meets the essential criteria will be offered an interview.
- 7.4 Where an applicant has met the criteria but was unsuccessful at interview their application form may be held on a reserve list for a period of six months should the same, or a comparable vacancy, become available.
- 7.5 Where an applicant has not been shortlisted, they may ask for feedback. Where this is requested brief feedback will be given.

## **8. The Selection Process**

- 8.1 The person specification will help decide the methods that are to be used to select the applicants. Using a combination of methods is the most reliable way of testing applicants' abilities and will help select the best person for the job.
- 8.2 Applicants will be given advance notice of the selection methods that will be used, including information that issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students will be covered. The HR Lead ~~Administrator/Office Manager~~ will find out if the applicant has any special requirements in participating in the selection process.
- 8.3 The purpose of any selection method is to seek further evidence of how the individual meets the person specification, and to inform them about the job. The chosen methods therefore will be structured around the person specification.
- 8.4 Selection methods will be consistent in their approach and the same areas of the person specification will be explored with each candidate and will cover all the essential criteria. Evidence will be sought on the equal opportunities criteria and on the candidate's attitude toward children and young people and their ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of students. Normally each candidate will be asked the same questions for each criterion; however the panel has the flexibility to adapt these questions to meet the requirements of particular candidates and for the appointment of the best person. The panel may wish to explore some aspects of the applicant's work history in more detail if they feel that it will produce evidence of meeting criteria or contra-indications. It is important to ask about gaps in employment. Any issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students arising out of references that have been received prior to the interview will be explored with the applicant.

Recruitment and selection is a two-way process and applicants will be given enough information to make an informed decision about whether they want and can do the job. This information will be given in a consistent manner to all applicants. They will be given an opportunity to ask questions. If school visits or talks from existing staff members are offered,

they will be offered to all applicants. Ideally interviews should be face to face, where this is difficult to organise an initial remote interview may be considered.

## **9. Interview Notes and Records**

- 9.1 A record will be kept of the selection process and will include brief notes from the interview process. It is important that panel members keep records to be able to justify their decisions and to assist in giving feedback and to deal with any complaint regarding appointments. It is good practice for the HR Lead or HR Manager or Headteacher to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants following the interview when requested to do so.

## **10. Final Selection**

- 10.1 After all the candidates have been interviewed each panel member will assess the person specification criteria independently.
- 10.2 Each candidate will be rated according to the extent they meet the particular requirements of the person specification.
- 10.3 The Chair of the panel will collate the panel's views and together they will reach agreement about the most appropriate candidate.

## **11. Communicating the Decision**

- 11.1 In most instances, the Headteacher/HR Manager (or chair of the panel in the case of a Headteacher or CEO appointment) will make the initial provisional offer of the job verbally to the successful candidate making it clear that the offer is subject to satisfactory references, medical clearance, and DBS disclosure. The offer will be confirmed in writing as soon as possible.
- 11.2 The unsuccessful candidates should be informed as soon as possible either verbally or in writing and arrangements made to give them feedback if required.

## **12. References and Verification, Identification and Qualifications**

- 12.1 The following is based on the latest version of the Safer Recruitment section of Keeping Children Safe in Education

At least 2 Professional and character references will be sought, one of which must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer, if previous employment was in education, the reference **must** be from the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher, in other fields of work the reference must be from the Line Manager. If it is not possible to provide a second employer reference, a second referee could be an individual known to the candidate for at least 2 years and 'a person of good standing in their community' or work in (or be retired from) a recognised profession. If possible, the referee should provide confirmation of their status such as writing on headed notepaper or from a professional email address. Referees **must not** be related to or involved with the candidate e.g. related by birth or marriage or be in a relationship with or live at the same address. Additional references may be requested

where appropriate e.g. where the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past.

References will be sought on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones, and should be obtained prior to the interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at the interview. In exceptional cases it may not be possible to do this either because of delay on the part of the referee or because a candidate does not wish their current employer to be approached at this stage. Before any appointment is made, satisfactory references must have been received.

Structured written references must be obtained. Open references and testimonials are not acceptable.

When references are requested, a copy of the Job Description and Person Specification should be provided to the referee. Referees should be reminded that they have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission and that relevant factual content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.

The following topics will be covered:

- The referee's relationship with the candidate eg was it a working relationship, if so what was it; how long has the referee known the candidate and in what capacity.
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question, and for specific comments about the applicant's suitability for the post and how s/he has demonstrated that s/he meets the Person Specification.
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children, and, if not, for specific details of the referee's concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the person might be unsuitable.

Current or previous employers should be asked:

- To confirm details of the applicant's post and salary.
- Details of any statutory parental leave taken.
- To provide verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct including whether the applicant has been subject to capability proceedings.
- To give details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to in which the disciplinary sanction is still current.
- To give details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired together with the outcome of those.
- To give details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults or behaviour towards children, young people or vulnerable adults and the outcome of those concerns, eg

whether the allegations or concerns were investigated, the conclusion reached and how the matter was resolved.

All references should be checked to ensure that questions have been answered satisfactorily, and where this has not been the case, the referee should be contacted to provide further information. Any discrepancy between references and the application form should be taken up with the candidate.

- 12.2 If there is a requirement for a qualification, candidates must be asked for evidence of that qualification, holding a teaching qualification does not guarantee the individual is suitable to work with children. For all employed posts, the school will check with the on line records at: [Check a teacher's record - GOV.UK](#) –website that the individual holds QTS, whether there are any restrictions in force against the teacher, and that the individual is not on the 'Prohibition from Teaching' list. For overseas teachers, a letter from the professional regulating authority (previously known as 'certificate of professional competence') must be provided. For information regarding recruitment of overseas teachers guidance can be found: [Recruit teachers from overseas - GOV.UK](#) Information required may vary in different countries. For ECTs, the school will check that they have satisfactorily completed their statutory induction period. For staff in a managerial post the school will check they are not listed on the S128 list preventing them from managing in schools.
- 12.3 Candidates should be asked about their eligibility to work in this country and provide evidence of such. Where the candidate requires sponsorship to work in the UK the HR Manager will offer advice before the offer is confirmed. Overseas teachers without a QTS are allowed to teach in the UK for up to 4 years before a QTS is required, '4 Year Rule'.
- 12.4 Candidates should be informed that a Barred List check will be carried out and about the requirement for a DBS disclosure. Where possible, for candidates who have worked or been resident overseas in the previous five years, a check of their criminal record from the relevant authority will be sought. If this is not possible, a risk assessment will be undertaken.
- 12.5 Candidates will be asked to complete an online pre-employment medical questionnaire, should any health considerations be reported the HR Manager will discuss with the Headteacher first, then the candidate and support considered if required.
- 12.6 Original documents **must** always be seen to verify a person's identity and qualifications. Ideally this should be carried out on the day of the interview by scrutiny of appropriate documents. However where this is not possible the process should be carried out as soon as possible after the interview and in all cases prior to the appointment being finalised. This applies to identity, qualifications, eligibility to work in the UK and DBS disclosure applications. Copies of the original documents should be taken and a note made on them that the original document has been seen, together with the date, this includes being aware of the potential for individuals changing their name. Best practice is checking the name on their birth certificate, where this is possible. The copies should be signed by the person who is witnessing the originals and then placed on file with the exception of the copy of the DBS certificate which should be

recorded on the Single Central Register as verified and then the copy disposed of by shredding or in confidential waste.

### **13. Statement of particulars**

All employees will be provided with a written statement of particulars on or before their start date and post as per the statutory guidance.

### **14. Complaints**

14.1 Information on the applicant's right to appeal if they feel that they have been unfairly discriminated against during the selection process on the grounds of race, gender, caring responsibilities, disability, gender re-assignment, age, social class, sexual orientation and religion or belief will be included in the candidate information pack. Complaints must be made within 3 working days of being informed of the decision.

14.2 If any member of the panel has concerns about the conduct of another panel member they should immediately express their concern to that individual. If they continue to have concerns they should discuss them with the Chair of the panel/Headteacher.

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