



# Recruitment & Selection Policy

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## 1. Scope

- 1.1 This policy applies to the recruitment of all staff in the Haberdashers' Academies Trust South (hereby referred to in this document as the Trust), including volunteers and governors, where appropriate. We expect any external recruitment provider to also adhere to this policy when acting on our behalf.

## 2. Aims

- 2.1 Our vision is to provide an environment where all children and young people can succeed. Their success depends on having a highly skilled, diverse, and motivated workforce and one where we attract, recruit, and retain the very best people and reflect the community we serve.
- 2.2 The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff involved in recruitment and selection to adhere to our Child Protection policy and ensure that our practices deter, identify and reject people who are unsuitable to work with children and young people.
- 2.3 We strive to ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are non-discriminatory, fair, and transparent and aim to attract and recruit the very best candidates from a diverse field.
- 2.4 Our recruitment and selection methods comply with legislation and in particular the Equality Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act (GDPR) 2018. We must by law maintain a Single Central Record (SCR) which records all vetting and barring checks that have been undertaken in ~~respect~~ of those working in each school and in the central team. This is a DfE requirement under the Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) statutory guidance.

## 3. Implementation

### 3.1 The Recruitment and Selection Cycle

- 3.2 It is important that anyone undertaking recruitment in any of our schools and within central teams understand the recruitment and selection cycle and the importance of following each stage. This starts from thinking about the vacancy and how best to fill it, right through to appointing and inducting the successful candidate and asking them for feedback on the process from their perspective
- 3.3 Always have in mind how our recruitment practices may be perceived by prospective candidates.
- 3.4 It is therefore advised that as well as undertaking mandatory Safer Recruitment training, line managers consider specific training in recruitment and selection skills. Details of such training programmes can be obtained from our Director of Professional Learning. There are also useful external resources on the People Hub for additional reading in this area.

Diagram 1: Recruitment and Selection Process



### 3.5 Job Analysis - Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

- 3.5.1 When recruiting the job description and person specification for the role must be up to date and reviewed before any advertisement is placed. As part of this review it is important to consider any feedback from the outgoing postholder (where relevant) from the exit interview process. It might also be useful to review any feedback from the schools/departmental staff engagement survey relevant to the department/role.
- 3.5.2 A thorough review of the role should be considered before any advertisement of the vacancy occurs. It may be that following a review the position can be filled in a different way, including a reallocation of responsibilities across the team, offering it as a part-time/job share arrangement, using it as a secondment opportunity, redeployment opportunity or a total reorganisation, etc.
- 3.5.3 The job description and person specification must make explicit reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, particularly for school-based roles.
- 3.5.4 Person specifications should outline the essential and desirable knowledge, skills, experience, and qualifications required by the successful candidate and particular care should be given to ensure that these requirements are not discriminatory. Inaccurate and incomplete job descriptions can have a significant impact on the quantity and quality of candidates attracted to the role.

- 3.5.5 The appropriate pay range or spot salary for the post, using the relevant trust pay policies, should be advertised where possible and appropriate to do so.

### **3.6 Authorisation**

- 3.6.1 The advertising of any school vacancy needs to be authorised by the Principal. The advertising of a central vacancy should be authorised by the CEO if additional cost is involved. Where the school budget is in deficit, then advertising of the vacancy should be agreed with the Finance Director and CEO. The CEO and / or a Director will also be expected to be involved in SLT level roles even if there is a budget for such a new post.
- 3.6.2 Once the role has been approved, a planning meeting should take place to agree the key details of the campaign (advertising and interview dates, media, selection and panel members, etc.). The planning meeting should involve the Principal or Director and the HR Adviser.

## **4. The Trust brand and employee value proposition**

- 4.1 Recruitment in the education sector in both the inner and outer London areas is highly competitive.
- 4.2 All organisations have, consciously or not, an employer brand. It's the way in which organisations differentiate themselves in the labour market, enabling them to recruit, retain and engage the right people. A strong employer brand helps businesses compete for the best talent and establish credibility. It should connect with an organisation's values and must run consistently through its approach to people management (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development).
- 4.3 The employee value proposition (EVP) is partly how we promote this brand both to existing and potential employees, and sets out the employee "offer", both in terms of tangible reward and benefits but also aims to describe the culture and ethos of the organisation, and "how we do things".
- 4.4 The Trust needs to promote this employee value proposition when advertising vacancies and highlight the benefits of working for the Trust, as well as the individual school. This is summarised in our People Strategy and includes our employee reward schemes, our proactive approach to family friendly policies, such as flexible working and enhanced maternity/paternity benefits, our CPD offer and the professional learning offer, health and wellbeing and our passionate commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion as set out in our EDI statement of intent.
- 4.5 It is important our EVP and brand are used creatively, diversely but also appropriately and presents the Trust in the best possible way. Advice can be sought from the Director of People about creative and alternative way of attracting candidates to the trust, even when perhaps they are not actively job seeking. These could include specialist subject CPD events, return to teaching events, career fairs, overseas teachers advertising and other recruitment initiatives.

## 5. Trust's EDI recruitment statement of intent

- 5.1 *"We want prospective employees to see themselves working at a Haberdashers' school and feel a sense that they will be valued. This will require us to walk in the shoes of potential applicants, to understand how they perceive us through the environment we create and extend our reach beyond the norm.*
- 5.2 *Great selection and recruitment practices will naturally enable a diverse and talented field of applicants. Our processes should enable applicants to shine and for us to see them at their very best. We should be aware of the influence of unconscious bias and challenge each other should this arise. Understanding the barriers that some applicants face, and our own perceptions of what the best person for the post looks and sounds like, brings the unconscious into the conscious".*

## 6. Advertising

- 6.1 There is a Trust recruitment pack which should form the basis of all adverts and recruitment paperwork. All adverts must include at least:
- a. Job title,
  - b. Main duties and responsibilities,
  - c. Location,
  - d. Reference to salary package or range
  - e. Skills, qualifications, and experience required,
  - f. Closing date for application,
  - g. Details of the selection methods and interview dates ,
  - h. Relevant information about the school/department and the Trust,
  - i. Have the application form and EO monitoring form attached or a link to it,
  - j. Equal opportunities statement and
  - k. Safer recruitment statement.
- 6.2 Consideration should be given to the advertising channels, as this can be very costly, and sometimes not entirely inclusive of a diverse audience. As well as placing on the trust's website and our People Hub for internal staff advertising options include local papers, commercial job boards (which are normally free), national and professional publications, TES, Guardian, School Week and the DfE vacancy service etc. Online adverts should be considered rather than full print publications. It is also encouraged to think of wider media where candidates from minority backgrounds are more likely to be attracted.
- 6.3 Consideration should also be given to social media and how best to communicate our vacancies, this includes using the Trust's Twitter and LinkedIn accounts and the school's own social media

channels. Advice can be sought from the Trust's communications team. The Trust's social media policy must be followed.

- 6.4 The language, tone, images of the advert and social media postings should be carefully selected to ensure that it truly reflects our culture and way of working. We want the best people to want to work with and for us.
- 6.5 All advertisements will clearly state the closing date for applications, which would not normally be for less than 2 weeks. They should also include the dates of interviews, which should aim to be as close to the closing date as possible so as not to 'lose' good candidates.
- 6.6 For certain specialist or hard to fill vacancies a recruitment agency or executive search agency may be considered but should be approved by the Principal. There must be a contract for services in place when using such agencies.
- 6.7 For secondment opportunities, it will be considered reasonable to advertise these internally only, as long as the way in which these opportunities are advertised across the Trust gives an equal opportunity for all employees to be considered. This will typically be by placing the advert on the People Hub.
- 6.8 The HR team will prepare a recruitment pack for interested candidates, which will include the job description and person spec details, EO form, disclosure form and other relevant information to the role. The recruitment pack template can be found on the People Hub.
- 6.9 All roles will also be advertised internally. The Trust will choose at times, when appropriate, only to advertise internally in order to provide development opportunities to existing staff.
- 6.10 Consideration should be given to our internal talent pipelines and individuals identified as having high potential through the appraisal and talent management system, should be directly contacted about relevant vacancies, whilst making it clear it is not in any way a guaranteed offer of any role.
- 6.11 All internal candidates must discuss their application with their Principal or Director for information purposes. Provided internal applicant meets the essential criteria for the role, they will be shortlisted for interview.

## **7. Handling Applications**

- 7.1 Applicants must complete the trust's application form for all vacancies. CV's and incomplete application forms will not be accepted. They do not provide a common data set, may allow candidates to omit information and does not comply with safer recruitment guidance. They should also complete the EO monitoring form. Recruiters must use the Trust application forms.
- 7.2 All applications must be acknowledged by email from the HR team.

- 7.3 The applications will be returned to the relevant HR team stated on the advertisement. Late applications will only be considered at the discretion of the recruiting manager if an acceptable reason is given.

## **8. Short-listing**

- 8.1 The short-listing pack, prepared by the HR team, should include the application forms, job description, person specification and any other information sent by the applicant, with the exception of the EO Monitoring Form and Confidential Disclosure which should be kept separately.
- 8.2 The essential and desirable criteria from the person specification will be used to shortlist applicants for interview and assessment.
- 8.3 The shortlisting panel must comprise of at least two people, who should independently complete the short-listing form and then come together to agree the final shortlist. At least one member of the shortlisting panel must be trained in Safer Recruitment. The HR team member will be present at the shortlisting meeting and will take notes of the discussion and outcome.
- 8.4 The shortlisting panel should carefully check the application form for gaps in employment in particular, which should be diligently followed up at interview stage.
- 8.5 A template shortlisting matrix is available on the People Hub or from the HR team.
- 8.6 All unsuccessful candidates should be informed of the outcome of their application as soon as possible following the shortlisting process.

## **9. Interviewing and selection**

- 9.1 It is important that we do our best to create an environment where candidates feel at ease and are given every opportunity to show their strengths. The purpose of the selection process is to find out what they are capable of. Processes should not be so complex or challenging as to make candidates feel uncomfortable. We will not see them at their best. Alerting applicants to some of the questions beforehand will help to achieve this. If it is decided to do this the recruiting manager will ensure that all candidates receive the same information so that everyone is treated consistently and fairly.

### **Interview Panels**

- 9.2 A minimum of two members of staff will form the interviewing panel, and at least one of these must have completed safer recruitment training.
- 9.3 The interview panel should nominate a Chair, who may ultimately need to make any final decision on the appointment and therefore this is normally the most senior person on the panel.

- 9.4 Where candidates have requested any specific adjustments to attend interview due to a disability, this must not be revealed to the interview panel unless it is essential to do so.

## **Selection Methods**

- 9.5 A number of selection methods may be considered to assess a candidate's suitability for the post against the person specification, depending on the nature of the role. These could include:
- a. Panel interviews,
  - b. Presentations/assemblies,
  - c. Group decision making/discussion exercises,
  - d. Group discussions with staff and/pupils,
  - e. Delivering lessons, feedback on lesson observations and learning walks:
  - f. In-tray exercises,
  - g. Aptitude tests (verbal or no-verbal reasoning and numerical),
  - h. Written exercises (text or data),
  - i. Psychometric personality questionnaires, but only when carried out by a trained person holding a Level 2 qualification from the British Psychological Society (BPS).
  - j. Teaching observation / taking an assembly etc
- 9.6 All candidates should be subject to the same selection tasks. Every interview should be structured, and the same questions asked for all candidates. It is however acceptable to ask follow up questions or probing questions based on a candidate's response.
- 9.7 The interview panel must ensure that questions are asked regarding any gaps in employment and any anomalies or inconsistencies in the application form.
- 9.8 It is important to remember that interviews alone have been proven not to be a good predictor of future performance, and therefore it is highly recommended to select a range of selection methods. This can be split over a stage 1 and stage 2 selection process to filter out candidates at each stage.
- 9.9 Whatever selection methods are used the notes and scores of each candidate's assessment must be clearly recorded and retained by the Chair of the panel. This will then be passed on to the HR team and retained in a confidential and secure place for a minimum of 6 months, after which they should be destroyed securely.
- 9.10 A template interview record is available on the People Hub or from your HR team.
- 9.11 It is important that in shortlisting and selection methods that the recruitment panel is aware of conscious and unconscious bias and ensures that their judgement is checked and challenged

appropriately by other members of the panel. From time to time the HR team will quality control recruitment and selection processes across the Trust.

- 9.12 The Chair of the panel will usually contact the successful candidate by telephone and gain a verbal acceptance of the post, subject to pre-employment checks. Unsuccessful candidates can either also be contacted by the Chair or alternatively the HR team can prepare the unsuccessful letters, signed by the Chair.
- 9.13 Feedback should always be offered to all candidates, usually by the Chair or another member of the panel. This will normally be verbally.
- 9.14 It is important to handle unsuccessful internal candidates with additional care, to ensure they remain fully committed to the Trust and understand the reasons why they have not been successful on this occasion and how they might work on the skills/experience they need to be successful in the future.

## 10. References

- 10.1 Two satisfactory references are required from all successful applicants, one of which must be the current or most recent employer or study provider. Open references usually entitled “to whom it may concern” are not acceptable.
- 10.2 If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, it is also advisable to check with the school, college, or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.
- 10.3 References for teaching posts should be taken up prior to interview, whilst support staff references can be taken up after interview for the successful candidate.
- 10.4 Successful applicants for teaching posts must hold the QTS or be expected to obtain this within 12 months of their employment with the Trust.
- 10.5 The reference request template letter can be obtained on the People Hub and a copy of the job description and person specification should be attached to the reference request letter.
- 10.6 For internal candidates a reference is required from their current line manager .
- 10.7 Employment reference requests must be sent to and received from a professional email address in order to ensure the legitimacy of the referee.
- 10.8 References will be held by the Chair of the panel and the interviewing panel will only have access once a decision has been made in principle.

- 10.9 References will not be used to aid the decision-making process but solely to confirm the decision.
- 10.10 Any unsatisfactory (or vague/incomplete) references will be investigated further by the Chair of the recruitment panel, in consultation with the Principal and HR Advisor.
- 10.11 Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the applicant and must be satisfactorily explained by them before proceeding further with any offer of employment.
- 10.12 Ultimately, if references are found to be unsatisfactory or not received after chasing, then the provisional offer must be withdrawn.

## **11. Making Offers of Employment**

### **Decision to Recruit**

- 11.1 The final decision to offer a position is taken by the Chair of the recruitment panel, in consultation with the Principal.

### **Remuneration and Benefits**

- 11.2 The Chair of the panel, in consultation with the Principal, will determine the remuneration offered to the successful candidate, in line with the trust's pay policies.
- 11.3 Care must be given to ensure that the salary offered does not create discriminatory differentials between other staff doing similar roles with similar experience.
- 11.4 The successful candidate should be advised in their offer of the benefits offered to staff working in the trust and signposted to the People Hub at the start of their employment.

### **Offer letter to the Successful Candidate**

- 11.5 The Principal is responsible for making formal offers of employment and will write to successful candidates with the following details:
- a. Main terms and conditions of employment (offer letter and contract templates available on the People Hub);
  - b. Pre-employment medical check;
  - c. Enhanced DBS check;
  - d. Induction information, including start date, any forms and information that will need to be completed on the first day (emergency contact, bank details, P45/P46).
- 11.6 Any deviation from the contract template can only be agreed with the Principal and/or Director of People.

### **Pre-Employment Checks**

- 11.7 The Trust's Safeguarding Children policy should be strictly adhered to at this stage.

11.8 An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

11.9 When appointing new staff, schools must:

- a. Verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address;
- b. Obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all staff;
- c. Obtain a separate barred list check and undertake a written risk assessment if an individual will start work before the DBS certificate is available;
- d. Check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online service;
- e. Check that a candidate who is a former teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, using the Employer Access Online service;
- f. Check that the individual is not subject to a Section 128 direction ( Prohibition from Management checks) via the Teaching Agency . This check is relevant to those in a management role. Individuals taking part in management include Trustees, Principal and Executive Principal, CEO, Senior Directors and Directors, any teaching position on the senior leadership team, any support role on the senior leadership team and any teaching position carrying out a department headship.
- g. Verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities;
- h. Verify a person's right to work in the UK. Guidance can be found here: Checking a job applicant's right to work - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk));
- i. Verify all mandatory professional qualifications and professional status, e.g. QTS status (unless properly exempted), NPQH; (for teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applies to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999);
- j. If the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks considered appropriate. Teachers will be requested to provide proof of their past conduct as a teacher. This should be a letter of professional standing issued by the professional regulating authority in the country in which they worked. Guidance can be found here: Criminal records checks for overseas applicants - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).
- k. Check that a candidate to be employed is not disqualified from working in a relevant setting, as set out in the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018.

## **Recruitment of ex offenders**

11.10 The Trust will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of their criminal record. If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically bar them from employment. Each case will be decided on its own merits.

11.11 All posts are by reason of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended) exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all applicants for employment will be asked to disclose if they have any convictions, cautions, reprimands, or final warnings that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013 and 2020). Any applicant who

is unsure as to whether a conviction, caution, reprimand or final warning is or is not “protected” should consult the Ministry of Justice website.

- 11.12 A failure to disclose a non-protected caution or conviction may lead to an application being rejected or, if the failure is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the ground of gross misconduct. A failure to disclose a previous conviction may also amount to a criminal offence.
- 11.13 The following will be considered in relation to any previous conviction:
- a. Whether the conviction or other matter is relevant to the position in question;
  - b. The seriousness of any offence or other matter;
  - c. The length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
  - d. Whether the applicant has a pattern or offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
  - e. Whether the applicant’s circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
  - f. The circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation offered.
- 11.14 If the post involves regular contact with children it is high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, class A drug related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.
- 11.15 If the post involves access to money or budgetary responsibility it is high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, theft, deception or fraud.
- 11.16 If the post involves driving responsibilities, it is high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of dangerous driving or of an offence of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs within the last 10 years.
- 11.17 If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in the Disclosure they may contact the DBS directly.

## **Commencing Employment**

- 11.18 All relevant documentation will be completed by the HR lead, (acting on the delegated authority of the Principal or Director of People) on the new post holder’s first day, or as soon as possible thereafter.
- 11.19 The post holder will be issued with a contract of employment, signed by the Principal, on day 1 of employment, at the latest although this will normally be issued before the start date.
- 11.20 An induction programme should be arranged and where possible sent to the individual in advance of their start date. The Induction materials are published on the People Hub.

- 11.21 The HR lead will complete the new starter check list, enter the new employee on the MIS system and ensure all relevant paperwork has been signed and forwarded to the payroll administrator in the Central Team.

## **Training**

- 11.22 Everyone involved in recruitment must have the appropriate knowledge and skills to make effective and fair recruitment decisions. It is mandatory for all shortlisting and recruitment panels to have at least one member trained in Safer Recruitment, but ideally this should be all members of the panel.
- 11.23 HR leads will be acting on the authority of Principals but should be suitably trained in recruitment processes and must be fully aware of the school's accountability for Safeguarding Children and maintaining a complete and up to date Single Central Record for the school. This is an Ofsted requirement and can be a determining factor in any inspection.
- 11.24 HR leads must be familiar with the HR administration processes on the Trust Admin site.

## **12. Communication**

- 12.1 This policy and procedure is available on the Trust's People Hub site, which is accessible by all Trust employees.

## **13. Monitoring and evaluation**

- 13.1 This Recruitment and Selection Policy and procedures will be reviewed annually to ensure consistency, fairness, and effectiveness and in the light of changes in employment legislation.

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