



Safer Recruitment Policy

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Ratified by the Trust Board: 01.10.24

Review Date: September 2026

Other related academy policies that support this Safer Recruitment policy include Child Protection, Data Protection, Equality and Diversity, Induction, Staff Code of Conduct, Whistle Blowing and Disciplinary.

At Hull Collaborative Academy Trust, we do not discriminate against any child or adult on the grounds of race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We embrace the individuality of all our community members and comply fully with the Equality Act 2010.

Introduction

We aim to create a culture that safeguards and promotes the welfare of children and young people in our schools. As part of this aim, we adopt robust recruitment procedures that deter and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children and young people from applying or securing employment, or volunteering opportunities within our schools.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the minimum requirements of a recruitment process that:

- Attracts and selects the best possible applicants to apply for any vacancies
- Has safeguarding as of paramount importance throughout all stages of the recruitment, selection, and induction process.
- Deters prospective applicants who are unsuitable for work with children or young adults
- Identifies and rejects applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and young people
- Follows current legislation and statutory guidance following the Richard Review 2004 and the Keeping Children Safe in Education document 2018 (reviewed annually).

Statutory Requirements

The policy supports the statutory requirements outlined by the DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education and Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership guidelines and procedures.

Identification of recruiting parties

The school currently has members of staff who have completed the recommended Safer Recruitment training and passed the required assessment.

The named Safer Recruitment Personnel are: See Annex I

This will fully meet the requirements as outlined by the DfE. The Head teacher will ensure all staff involved in the recruitment process have been fully briefed about the procedures and protocol prior to the commencement of engagement in the recruitment process. We request that all suitable safer recruitment trained staff refresh the course content every five years.

Advertising

The Trust is committed to developing employees so usual practice should be to advertise posts internally, in the first instance before being advertised externally. This is of particular importance if there are situations where a current employee may be put at risk either through fixed term contracts, restructures or other significant reasons. If a recent (within 3 months) recruitment process has resulted in a strong second candidate, consideration may be given to offering the same role if another vacancy arises.

It is of fundamental importance that all advertisements for posts must include the following statement:

‘Hull Collaborative Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post holders are subject to appropriate vetting procedures and a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring disclosure’.

Planning for Recruitment

Where a potential vacancy is identified, a review of the needs of the school should be done to ensure:

- the post is necessary
- whether any changes are needed to the role responsibilities or duties
- whether any changes are needed the knowledge, skills, experience and competencies required for the role
- any potential restructures which may affect the post
- the budget position

Once the review is done, the job description and person specification should be evaluated by the HR Team to confirm the grade of the post. Support staff posts will be evaluated using the NJC Job Evaluation Scheme. Finally, a Recruitment Audit form needs to be completed and signed off by the HR Lead, CFO and CEO.

Applications

Applicants will receive a job description and person specification for the role applied for. Our schools will use a standard application form for every applicant, based on the Trust templates. CVs will not be accepted. We will expect and require candidates for all posts, paid or voluntary, to provide a full employment history and to account for any gaps or discrepancies either on the application or, subsequently, at interview. Incomplete application forms may be rejected at the short-listing stage.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in their application being rejected or in summary dismissal if the applicant has already been appointed. This may also result in the matter being referred to the police and/or a professional regulatory body e.g., the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Shortlisting

Shortlisting of candidates will be carried out in relation to the identified person specification for the post. Each candidate will be firstly checked against the 'Essential' criteria'. If a large number of candidates meet the essential criteria, then the selection panel may consider the 'desirable' criteria in order to make a subsequent shortlist.

In line with KCSIE statutory guidance, the school may carry out an online search of candidates as part of its due diligence checks to identify candidates who may not be suitable to work with children and/or may be likely to bring the school into disrepute. The searches only include information that is publicly available online, some of the information that the school looks for includes evidence of offensive or inappropriate behaviour, discriminatory comments, inappropriate photos and anything that suggests unsuitability to work with children. The review is carried out by a member of staff who does not sit on the selection panel for recruitment and who only provides information found in the online review which impacts safeguarding or reputation. Any concerns that are found from the online search are reviewed and discussed with the candidate at interview. If necessary, further advice on online checks can be sought from the HR team or from the Trust's Strategic Safeguarding Lead.

References

References will be sought directly from the nominated referees, at least one of whom should be their current or most recent employer. The second referee should ideally be from a different, recent employer. In some instances, a third reference may be requested from a relevant employer, if the candidate has not recently worked with children. References should be requested from a senior person with appropriate authority and ability to comment on the candidate's suitability for the role and should not be from a colleague. References will be completed using the HCAT agreed format. Open references will never be accepted (i.e., general and to 'Whom It May Concern'). If a candidate has previously worked for a HCAT school, within the last 5 years, one reference must be provided from the Head of the HCAT school.

References will be sought and received wherever possible for all shortlisted candidates, including internal ones before interviews take place. The purpose of this is to use the interview as the opportunity to explore any issues of concern that may have been raised with the candidate's references.

References should always be obtained from the candidates' current employer and should ideally be from two different employers. Where a candidate is not currently employed, verification of their most recent period of employment and reason for leaving should be obtained from the school, college, local authority, or organisation at which they were last employed. If an applicant has no previous employment, references should be sought from any voluntary experience they may have had. Character references should ideally be from people who are able to comment on the candidate's suitability to work with children.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education, all references need to be scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.

Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or e-mail to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A written follow up will be required from the referee as a record of any matters discussed over the telephone.

Referees will always be asked specific questions about:

- The candidate's suitability to work with children and young people;
- Any disciplinary warnings, including time-expired warnings that relate to the safeguarding of children.
- The candidate's suitability for the post.

School employees are entitled to see and receive, if requested copies of their employment references.

Selection Process

Our schools use a range of selection techniques to identify the most suitable person for the post. Selection techniques will be determined by the nature and duties of the vacant post, but all vacancies will require an interview of short-listed candidates. At least 1 member of the panel will have completed the Safer Recruitment Training.

Interviews will always be face-to face, apart from in exceptional circumstance. In instances when a face-to-face interview has not been carried out at the first interview stage, and the candidate is still being considered for appointment, a face-to-face meeting must be carried out before an offer of employment is made.

Prior to interviews, the interview panel will agree a set of structured questions, which will include:

- Exploring what attracts the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation to work with children or young people
- Probing a candidate's understanding of the nature of the role and the expectations this may have, for example, working with children with challenging behaviour and how they are prepared for this
- Examine skills, asking for examples of experience of working with children or young people which are relevant to the role
- Probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment frequently, and having these explained to a satisfactory conclusion

- Question so the candidate can demonstrate their capacity to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people
- In addition to the standard questions, the interview panel may ask any individual question necessary to clarify any discrepancies between the information supplied by the candidate at the interview/on their application form and that which was provided in the references. This relates to satisfying the panel about any matters relating to safeguarding as well as any other discrepancies.

Candidates will always be required:

- To explain satisfactorily any gaps in employment
- To explain to a satisfactory conclusion any anomalies or discrepancies in the information available to recruiters
- To declare any information that is likely to appear on a DBS enhanced clearance.

For some posts, including for members of the leadership group or teaching posts, the selection process will normally include an activity involving children or young people e.g., meeting the school council, taking an assembly, etc.

Decision

After all the candidates have been interviewed, the interview panel will consider all the information available to them and will score each candidate against the criteria for the post, which will identify which candidate should be appointed. The panel will make notes of the reason for its decision and will sign and date the Interview Record Form, which will be retained for six months after the date of the interview. The notes relating to the successful candidate will be retained indefinitely in their personal file.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018, applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. Applicants who wish to access their interview notes must make a 'subject access' request in writing within 6-months of the interview date. After such time all papers are then destroyed.

Please note that under GDPR, the employer has absolute exemption for any references we hold, whether as the supplier or the recipient, unless the referee has consented to the disclosure, or it is reasonable to disclose the reference without their consent.

Pre-appointment checks

All successful applicants are offered the role on a conditional basis and, prior to confirmation of appointment, are required to:

- To provide proof of identity
- A minimum of two satisfactory references
- To complete a DBS disclosure application and receive satisfactory clearance. A school must be in receipt of the DBS Enhanced Clearance as soon as it is available to the applicant. Failure to present this information will lead to disciplinary action being taken.
- A separate Children's Barred List check
- To provide actual certificates and qualifications (not photocopies) which must be signed off by the Head teacher. (SCR)
- To complete a confidential health questionnaire
- To provide proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK if appropriate.
- Complete a Childcare Disqualification declaration form, if required
- Be subject to a prohibition check, carried out by school.

- Produce a 'Good Conduct' certificate if they have lived outside of the United Kingdom within the last 10 years.

Safeguarding checks for teachers from overseas

Any individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools, which includes obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate (including children's barred list information, for those who will be engaging in regulated activity) even if the individual has never been to the UK. In addition, schools should carry out further checks, that are appropriate, so that any events outside the UK can be considered.

Schools can draw on a varying range of sources on a case-by-case basis, depending on the individual.

These checks could include:

- criminal records check for overseas applicants
- obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority (this is often the Department/Ministry of Education but varies across the world) in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.

Where this information is not available, the Trust or school should seek alternative methods of checking suitability and/or undertake a risk assessment that supports informed decision making on whether to proceed with the appointment. Prior to making an appointment in these circumstances, advice should be sought from the Trust's HR team and Strategic Safeguarding Lead.

Single Central Record

In line with DfE requirements, schools will keep and maintain a Single Central Record (SCR).

The SCR will list all staff who are employed at each school, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not employed by the school e.g., specialist sports coach or artist. The SCR will indicate whether the required pre-employment checks have been completed, what documents have been checked, when and by whom. The SCR will also clearly show which members of staff are working in the Early Years.

Staff members have a duty through their contract to immediately disclose during their employment if they are:

- charged or convicted of any criminal offence;
- in receipt of a police caution, reprimand, or warning, or if there is a formal child protection;
- disqualified under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 (when working in relevant childcare provision)
- barred from working with children or vulnerable adults;
- the subject of a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or Teacher Regulation Agency (TRA).

Policy on recruitment of ex-offenders

Schools will not unfairly discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of conviction or other details revealed. They will make appointment decisions based on merit and ability. If an applicant has a criminal record this will not automatically bar him/her from employment within our schools.

All positions within our schools are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. All applicants must therefore declare all previous convictions, including those which would normally be considered "spent", when applying for a position at our schools. A failure to disclose a previous conviction may lead to any application being rejected or, if the failure to disclose is discovered after employment has started, may lead to summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. A failure to disclose a previous conviction may also amount to a criminal offence.

It is unlawful for the Trust to employ anyone who is barred from working with children. It is a criminal offence for any person who is barred from working with children to attempt to apply for a position within a school.

The Trust will make a report to the Police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service if: -

- It receives an application from a barred person
- It is provided with false information in, or in support of an applicant's application or
- It has serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

Where a DBS certificate is required, it must be obtained from the candidate before, or as soon as practicably possible after the person appointment.

Whilst an individual can start work before the DBS certificate is available, the school must ensure that they are appropriately supervised and all other checks are complete, including a separate Children's Barred List check.

All individuals must present the original paper DBS certificate before being allowed unsupervised contact with children or young people.

Duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service

There is a legal requirement for our schools to make a referral to the DBS if any staff member is removed from regulated activity (or would have been removed had they not left), and we believe the individual has:

- Engaged in relevant conduct in relation to children or young people,
- Satisfied the harm test in relation to children or young people, or
- Been cautioned or convicted of a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representation) offence.

Duty to consider referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency

If a teacher is dismissed due to serious misconduct or might have been dismissed or ceased to use their services, had they not left, then the school must consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State.

Induction

All staff new in post, will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months which must be passed satisfactorily before they can be confirmed in post. All staff, including volunteers will receive an induction pack and receive training that will include safeguarding, safe working practices, whistle blowing and child protection. In addition, new starters will be provided with a copy of the last version of the DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (Part 1) and asked to sign to confirm receipt and understanding. Every new member of staff will have an identified Induction Mentor who will oversee the induction process for and continue to monitor their performance for a minimum of 12 weeks to ensure they adhere to policies and procedures as outlined in the Induction Process and Probationary Guidelines.

The Induction Mentor will ensure new staff members have the sufficient support and guidance and will monitor working practices to identify any anomalies. Any concerns will be passed immediately to the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Supply Staff

HCAT will only use those agencies which operate a Safer Recruitment Policy and supply written confirmation that all relevant checks have been satisfactorily completed. Any information disclosed as part of the DBS check will be treated confidentially.

The Office Manager will carry out identity checks when the individual arrives at school and add the individuals details to the Single Central Record until their services are no longer required.

Peripatetic Staff

The Trust will require that all necessary checks and DBS requirements have been satisfactorily completed for peripatetic staff.

Volunteers

There is an expectation that the school follows the same procedures for volunteers and will ensure they complete a volunteer application form, and two references are obtained. In instances where volunteers are working in school as part of a recognised Training Course (such as PGCE, NVQ etc) then references and completion of an application form will not be necessary.

Under no circumstances should a volunteer whom no checks have been obtained, be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Schools must obtain an enhanced DBS check, including a Children's Barred List check if a volunteer is working unsupervised and teaching, or looking after children or young people regularly. Schools are not legally entitled to request a Children's Barred List check on a supervised volunteer.

Record Retention

At HCAT we follow the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the employment practices code.

If an applicant is appointed, the school and Trust will retain any relevant information provided on individuals application form, together with any attachments and evidence of the pre-employment checks completed on their personnel file.

All personnel files are restricted and held securely.

Personnel files will be kept for six years after the person has left and will be destroyed by suitably secure means (e.g., shredding).

Table of changes

Date	Change or inclusion
September 2022	The following sections have been added to reflect the changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shortlisting – online searches• Safeguarding checks for teachers from overseas
2024	Added – planning for recruitment Updated – section on references, induction, pre-appointment checks and other minor updates

