

Autumn 2025

Next Review Date: Autum 2027

Safer Recruitment

For QUEST Schools

Company Number 09306360

Hindley Green Community Primary School
St. Peter's C. of E. Primary School
St. John's C. of E. Primary School Abram
St. John's C. of E. Primary School Hindley Green
University Collegiate School



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1. Introduction

People are QUEST's greatest asset and, as such, the recruitment and selection process is a vital tool in enabling Quest to appoint the right candidate.

It is crucial to invest an appropriate amount of time and effort into any recruitment and selection process. Poor recruitment and selection decisions can be costly, but they could also have more serious implications in relation to the safety and welfare of our pupils, staff morale and productivity.

A robust recruitment and selection process will assist with the appointment of the right candidate, first time.

2. Purpose

This policy is to define a clear, fair and transparent recruitment and selection process for QUEST. It also provides advice and guidance on a recruitment and selection process that is non-discriminatory in accordance with appropriate employment legislation.

The process outlined aims to ensure that equal opportunity is afforded to all applicants, and that any recruitment and selection process is compliant with the safer recruitment guidance as stipulated within the School Staffing Regulations 2009.

QUEST takes its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children very seriously (under section 175 of the Education Act 2002).

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the School Staffing Regulations 2009, the School Staffing (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publication Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. The guidance reflects, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2024. It is intended to ensure that all stages of the recruitment process contain measures to deter, identify, prevent and reject unsuitable people from gaining access to pupils within Quest.

We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff, volunteers and trustees, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and their welfare is our paramount concern.

The appointment of staff is one of the most important responsibilities of Quest. We take all reasonable steps to avoid against employing people who might pose a danger to pupils. Safeguarding children is a priority and incorporating safeguarding measures in the recruitment process is an essential part of that.

It is important to deter anyone who may pose a danger to pupils from the beginning of the recruitment process by showing that QUEST have a rigorous process that does not tolerate any form of abuse.

3. Advertisements

All advertisements include the following statement:

'The Board of Trustees is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children'

All advertisements state the need for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced criminal record with barred list check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

All job descriptions and/or person specifications also state the requirement of an enhanced DBS check. All candidates are also made aware that they must be legally entitled to work in the UK and comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act regulations.

An information pack is available to all prospective applicants and, included in this is a copy of our Safeguarding, Child Protection and Early Help Policy. These can also be found on our 'QUEST website: <https://www.quest-trust.org.uk>

4. Applications

All applicants are required by to complete a Quest application form which should contain a supporting letter of application.

Quest do not accept applications for any posts via a CV or letter as they do not provide adequate information for safer recruitment purposes.

A Quest application form provides a 'safety net' in the recruitment process as candidates are required to sign a statement to confirm the accuracy of the information they have provided and are warned about the potential consequences of false statements.

To support the safeguarding of children, all application forms are scrutinised to ensure that:

- ▶ They are fully and properly completed;
- ▶ The information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies; and
- ▶ Any gaps in employment are identified.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified will be noted so that these can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to shortlist the applicant.

Only candidates who meet the essential criteria will be shortlisted and invited to interview. Where there is a high number of candidates who meet all 'essential' criteria Quest will refer to 'desirable' criteria.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from being treated less favorable because they have protected characteristic; a disability is an identified protected characteristic. To encourage disabled applicants to apply for positions within our schools, positive action should be taken by ensuring those applicants who meet all the essential requirements for a post are 'guaranteed' an interview.

5. References

All candidates are required to provide two references and, e-mail addresses for referees are mandatory and applications without e-mail addresses will not be considered.

References will be requested directly from the referee who should be a senior person with appropriate authority within the organisation i.e. not just a colleague.

Two references will be requested for all shortlisted candidates, including internal applicants prior to interview, so that any issues or concerns raised can be explored further with the referee and/or taken up with the candidate at interview.

There will be circumstances, in which it might not be possible to obtain references prior to interview, either because of delay on the part of the referee, or because a candidate has exceptional reasons to the current employer not being approached until a later stage. However, obtaining references prior to interview is the overall aim in all cases.

Whilst the candidate nominates their own referees, Quest insists that the current (or most recent) employer is always one of the referees. If the employer is/was a school/academy then the referee provided must be the Headteacher of that school/academy. Where the applicant is not currently working with children but has done in the past, the second referee should be the employer by whom they were most recently employed to work with children.

Two references must be received for all candidates.

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will be scrutinised and, any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed this will also apply to internal candidates.

Referees are asked to complete Quest's pro-forma which asks:

- if the candidate has ever been the subject of any child protection issues or concerns;
- if the candidate is suitable for work with children;
- would they recommend the candidate without reservation;
- if the candidate has ever been subject to any disciplinary procedures; and
- details of any capability history in the previous two years, including the reasoning.

If all questions have not been answered or the reference is vague or unspecific, the referee will be contacted either by telephone or email and asked to provide written answers or clarification as appropriate. If further clarification is not received, this will be considered prior to full appointment.

The information provided in the reference is also compared with the application form to ensure consistency and accuracy. Any discrepancy in the information will be taken up with the applicant and the referee.

References provided directly by the candidate or 'open references' and testimonials addressed 'to whom it may concern' will not be relied upon.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations that are disclosed should be considered carefully when assessing the applicant's suitability for the post (including information obtained from the Teacher Services' checks referred to below).

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for employers to ask candidates about their health prior to making a job offer. It is therefore advisable not to request sickness absence information on any reference sought prior to interview. Should such information be requested prior to interview, school must be aware that this is not a justified reason not to offer a job role to a prospective candidate; to use sickness information as a reason not to make a job offer would not be compliant with the provisions outlined within the Equality Act 2010.

Further help and advice can be sought from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) website.

6. Digital footprint

Safeguarding within Quest is a priority.

Quest will complete an online search on all shortlisted candidates in line with:

- KCSIE guidance (compliance with legal obligation under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (as amended));
- the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015; and
- the Apprenticeships, Skill, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended)).

Following any searches should Quest colleagues have any concerns these must be addressed during the interview process.

7. Interview

Once shortlisting has taken place and the successful candidates have been selected, an invite to interview letter is sent to selected candidates as part of the invite to interview process.

The letter confirms the requirement for the successful applicant to undertake an enhanced DBS check.

A copy of Quest's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is also sent to candidates.

Copies of these policies are also available on Quest website – <https://www.quest-trust.org.uk>

On the day of the interview all shortlisted candidates are required to bring identification to be checked in accordance with DBS requirements, appropriate documents that must be able to satisfy the requirements of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act and qualifications. If any candidate applications forms were received unsigned or signed electronically the candidates will be asked to sign the disclosure section at interview.

All selection (interview) panels will consist of at least two senior members of staff, at least one of these staff will have a Safer Recruitment qualification as outlined in the School Staffing Regulations 2009. For senior posts, Trustees may also be included. Selection panel members should be consistent throughout the whole interview process.

A range and balance of interview questions that relate to the person specification criteria are devised for each interview. In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the selection panel will also explore:

- ▶ The candidate's attitude toward children and young people;
- ▶ Their ability to support Quest's and school's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- ▶ Their understanding of safeguarding; and
- ▶ Any concerns, inconsistencies or discrepancies in their application form.

The answers to these questions will also be followed up with referees.

At the end of the interview all candidates are advised that if they are successful, their offer of appointment is conditional, and is made subject to a satisfactory DBS check, two positive references deemed satisfactory by Quest and medical clearance. The candidate will be asked if they foresee a problem with this requirement and given an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have.

Where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred candidate before interview, Quest will ensure that it is received and scrutinised, and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before the person's appointment is finally confirmed.

For successful candidate/s, written records of the interview/s, observations and/or tests will be kept on the personnel file.

Under GDPR regulations, candidates can request to see their interview notes and selection panels may also wish to provide feedback to candidates. As such, selection documentation (interview notes) should be retained for six months after the date of interview prior to being securely destroyed.

8. Appointment

The successful candidate will be offered the appointment subject to:

- Two references satisfactory to the employer (if not possible to obtain prior to interview);
- Satisfactory completion of an enhanced criminal record with barred list check through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);

- Quest must adhere to the guidance from The Home Office Guidance on the application process for criminal records checks overseas, which states *"If you are applying for entry clearance [to teach in school], you must provide a criminal record certificate for any country where you have lived for 12 months or more (whether continuous or in total), in the 10 years prior to your application, while aged 18 or over."* Overseas Checks - Safeguarding In Schools and, If the overseas check is missing Quest will complete a suitable risk assessment using the Safeguarding in Schools Risk Assessment - <https://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Risk-Assessment-no-Overseas-Check-v.1.0.pdf>
- Medical and other employment checks undertaken by Quest - Successful candidates are required to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire. Upon receipt of the completed questionnaire, Quest's appointed Health Management/Occupational Health service will then advise if the candidate is 'fit for work' or 'fit for work with recommendations or adaptations' to be considered or 'unfit for work'. *(With the candidate's consent, Health Management may need to contact a candidate's GP for further information on their medical history before a decision can be made on their fitness for work);*
- Legal right to work in the UK - This will usually be the candidate's UK passport. However, Quest will follow Government issued guidance in cases where a candidate is unable to provide a UK passport. (From 1st January 2021, a new immigration system applies Quest will refer to guidance available at <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work> for overseas workers and, a copy of the evidence will be taken and kept on the candidate's file.
- Academic and teaching qualifications (if applicable) - Upon appointment/interview all candidates will be asked to provide original proof of any professional qualifications they hold which are either required for, or relevant to, the position. Copies will be taken and kept on their personnel file. If no original is to be found, Quest will ask the candidate to order replacement certificates;
- Prohibited from teaching check (if applicable)- Quest will undertake a Prohibited Teacher Check using the DfE's on-line Teacher Services on any person to be employed to carry out teaching work since April 2012 before they begin work at Quest. If they do not have QTS, Quest will search by name;
- Medical fitness to teach/work directly with children;
- Completion of staff suitability declaration (if applicable);
- Prohibition from Management of Independent Schools Check ("section 128 direction"):

Quest will check whether staff appointed to management positions are subject to a section 128 direction. The posts, which would fall under this definition are:

- ▶ CEO/ DCEO / CFO
- ▶ Executive Headteacher
- ▶ Headteacher
- ▶ Deputy / Assistant Headteachers
- ▶ Senior Leadership Team staff (including non-teaching staff)
- ▶ Teaching positions with departmental headship

and,

As a rule of principle, all checks will be made in advance of appointment or as soon as practicable after appointment.

The successful candidate will then be sent an appointment letter which confirms their conditional appointment and that it is subject to the above pre-employment checks.

Along with their appointment letter the successful candidate will be asked to complete the following forms and return them to the QUEST Central Team:

- Bank Form;
- Emergency contact form;
- Annual Declaration;
- Staff Code of Conduct; and
- Staff Suitability form

In circumstances where any of the pre-employment checks prove to be unsatisfactory, a conditional offer will be withdrawn where it is appropriate to do so.

Quest applies a consistent approach to recruitment and follows the starter checklist attached at Appendix 1.

Outcomes of the Application and Recruitment Process:

Where the following apply, QUEST will report the facts to the Police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service:

- The candidate is found to be on the Barred List, or the DBS Disclosure shows s/he has been disqualified from working with children by a Court;
- The candidate is found to have been prohibited from the teaching profession;
- A candidate has provided false information in, or in support of, his or her application; or
- There are serious concerns about a candidate's suitability to work with children.

9. Single Central Record

Quest must ensure there is a single central record of all pre-employment checks. This can be electronic, or paper based. All Multi-Academy Trusts must be able to provide information for each individual academy separately, and without delay.

10. Induction

Induction is an extension of the recruitment process. A robust and thorough recruitment and selection procedure help to ensure that the best person is appointed to the role, but it is equally important to induct them properly on commencement.

An induction programme is required for all new members of staff. The induction programme includes information on professional standards and boundaries in respect of child protection and safeguarding and promoting the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Reference is made to relevant statutory requirements and/or local guidance in these areas.

Statutory guidance includes, in particular, the DfE documents:

- ▶ [‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’](#) – all staff are required to read at least ‘Part One- Safeguarding Information for All Staff’;
- ▶ ‘Working together to Safeguard Children’ – which should be read and followed by all staff; and
- ▶ ‘The Prevent Duty’ – all staff are required to complete the PREVENT Duty training on-line at <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html>

The successful candidate will also be provided with copies of policies and procedures in relation to:

- ▶ Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, for example, child protection, anti-bullying, Positive Behaviour Management, Intimate Care, ICT & E-Safety and safeguarding procedures;
- ▶ Social media policy;
- ▶ Procedures and Protocols;
- ▶ Staff Code of Conduct;
- ▶ Information on how and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and
- ▶ Relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistleblowing.

The successful candidate is asked to sign to confirm that they have received all these policies.

The importance of adhering to Trust policies and procedures in these and all other areas will be emphasised. Care will be taken to ensure that all new employees are aware of and understand Trust policies, procedures and practice and are clear about their responsibilities in following these at all times. All employees will be required to read, sign and adhere to our Staff Code of Conduct.

11. Appointment and Safeguarding Procedures for Temporary Staff

Quest sometimes utilise professional supply teaching agencies. Checks are carried out with the relevant supply agency that the required checks have been carried out (identity, enhanced disclosure – renewed every 5 years, right to work in the UK, barred list, prohibition, qualifications, overseas checks, two references, declaration of medical fitness and checks on previous employment history).

Quest ensures that this is received in writing from the supply agency.

Quest will carry out an ID check on the supply staff on the first working day. The Information is input onto the school/Trust SCR (if the person is working for any length of time, e.g. beyond three days).

Supply teachers and other supply personnel, including agency staff, will receive all necessary information and guidance to enable them to carry out their temporary role effectively and in accordance with statutory requirements, as well as Quest's policies, procedures and practices. This will include child protection and safeguarding arrangements.

12. Safer Culture

It is never sufficient to assume that a safer recruitment and selection process and robust induction arrangements are enough to ensure that pupils are safe and that, there is no risk to them within our schools.

Creation of a safer culture, with on-going vigilance is essential and Quest will continue to strive to create and maintain a safer culture by:

- Having in place, and putting into practice, clear policies and procedures and ensuring that all employees are aware of and understand them;
- Setting acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour from all;
- Having in place clear procedures for reporting concerns, ensuring that all employees and volunteers know what the procedures are and their responsibility for following them;
- Taking concerns seriously and providing support to individuals raising them;
- Taking appropriate action in relation to concerns raised;
- Having in place robust and appropriate induction arrangements;
- Ensuring that all employees undertake child protection and other relevant training on a regular basis;

- Keeping the commitment to safeguarding and child protection on the agenda through regular discussion and/or reminders at staff meetings, training sessions etc;
- Learning from experience;
- Never thinking that enough has been done to ensure a safe culture; and
- Ensuring all staff have received adequate up-to-date safeguarding training.

This policy also links to the following named policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing;
- Allegations made against staff; and
- Privacy Notice for Job Applicants.

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024:

In September 2024, the DfE updated the statutory guidance on safeguarding.

Full guidance, **Keeping Children Safe in Education** can be accessed from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

13. Data Protection & GDPR

Quest will hold staff personal information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. QUEST hold personal data as set out in the Data Privacy Primary Notice and Recruitment and Employment Privacy Notice

This policy was updated and approved by the Board of Trustees in September 2025.



New Starter Checklist

NAME: _____

Action	Completed by		Date
Completed by Central HR team			
Appointment letter sent			
Signed Application form			
Signed JD/Person spec			
Completed iTrent form			
Compliance with asylum, immigration and nationality act (I.D.)			
HMRC form (P46) and P45			
Bank Form completed			
Emergency contact form complete			
Occupational Health check completed and cleared			
DBS received and cleared			
Qualifications copied			
Proof of National Insurance number			
Staff Suitability form signed and received			
References received and checked			
Staff Code of Conduct signed and received			
Annual Declaration			
ICT Policy signed			
Prohibition checked/Section128 (if applicable) https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-a-teachers-record			
Email address requested from ABtec			
Online search			
Headteacher/school notified of start date			
National cyber training – essential https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools#			
Email training (Prevent, Safeguarding etc)			
Prevent - Tell us about you Prevent duty training (support-people-vulnerable-to-radicalisation.service.gov.uk)			
Added to staff insurance (if applicable)			
Informed Head of Business and Operations to add to IMP staffing software			
To be completed by Admin Officer			
Personnel file created			
Contract details input on Bromcom			
Input on SCR			
Induction completed			
Inform line manager where applicable of health check			
Fob/access card ordered if applicable			

Inventory badge ordered and added to inventory system		
Staff details added to school website		
Piota app set up		
RECEIVED all statutory training: Safeguarding – Flick learning GDPR – Flick Learning Prevent National cyber training		
Written statement of Particulars returned and signed by employee		
Statement of Particulars filed in personnel file		

Documents checked and approved by

Date

Flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service Criminal Record Checks and Barred List Checks – Keeping Children Safe in Education

