



# Recruitment Policy

V6 July 2025



**SIGMA TRUST**

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## 1. Introduction

The Sigma Trust has implemented this policy to assist with recruitment and employee selection. It outlines the Trust's recruitment procedure and how the Trust ensures safer recruitment is considered at all levels of the recruitment process.

The safety and protection of the Trust's pupils/students is always at the forefront of our concerns, which is why this policy aims to embed a robust safeguarding culture into the recruitment practices of the Trust.

## 2. Policy Statement

The Trust is committed to the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

The Trust is committed to the development and career progression of its staff and will take this into account as appropriate when making decisions under this policy. This may include internal appointments to posts, in certain situations.

The Trust's full Recruitment & Selection Policy Statement including Data Protection information is at Appendix A.

## 3. Scope

The relevant principles described in this procedure will be applied in relation to all recruitment including:

- staff employed on a permanent basis,
- fixed term and casual staff;
- unpaid volunteers (see Section 6);

Safer recruitment practices are also expected to be applied for;

- those engaged via external organisations such as supply agencies (see Section 7)
- contractors and self-employed persons.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Trust Board to:

- ensure there are effective policies and procedures in place for the safe and effective recruitment of all staff and volunteers and for the engagement of other adults in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements;
- monitor compliance with those policies and procedures;
- elect members to sit on selection panels for the appointment of the CEO, Headteachers and other appointments as required;
- approve the appointment of the CEO and Headteachers.

## 4.1 Specific Roles & Responsibilities

Employee	Recruitment Decision	Approval
CEO	Panel - Trust Board	Trust Board
Headteachers	Panel - CEO / Trust Board	CEO / Trust Board
Governance Professional/Company Secretary & Chief Finance Officer	Panel - CEO / Trust Board	Trust Board
Senior Leaders	CEO Executive Headteacher / Headteacher	CEO (where applicable) Executive Headteacher / Headteacher
Other Teachers	Headteacher / Head of School	Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher
Support Staff	Line Manager	Headteacher
Trust Employee (Central Services)	CEO (where applicable) Chief Operations & Finance Officer (where applicable) Department Manager	CEO (where applicable) Chief Operations & Finance Officer

It is the responsibility of the CEO, Headteachers, and other managers involved in recruitment to:

- apply robust transparent and effective recruitment and selection processes in accordance with this procedure, statutory guidance and legal requirements; and
- ensure that safer recruitment practices are in operation and that all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff, volunteers and others engaged to work at an appropriate point in the recruitment process.

### Delegated Authority

- The confirmation of appointment for the roles of CEO, CFO and Company Secretary is directly with the Trustees and is not delegated.
- The confirmation of appointment for an Executive/Headteacher is delegated to the CEO.
- The confirmation of appointment of Senior Leadership team members is delegated to CEO or Executive /Headteachers.
- The confirmation of appointment for academy staff other than the senior leadership team is delegated to Executive/Headteachers.
- The appointment of all Central Team staff is delegated to the CEO and COFO.

At least one member of each interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

The CEO or relevant Executive/Headteacher may delegate the selection process of staff outside of the leadership group to other managers, but remains responsible for the decision to appoint.

## 5. The Recruitment Procedure

Please see Appendix B for a flow chart summarising the procedure. Further key details are provided below.

Internal vacancies are defined as any vacancy within the Trust.

### 5.1 Pre-advertisement

#### 5.1.1 Identifying a vacancy

Before any action is initiated, careful consideration will be given to the necessity of filling the post, the tasks to be undertaken and the skills, attributes and behaviours required to do the job. Where necessary, amendments to the role and staffing structure will be approved by the CEO.

#### 5.1.2 Job Descriptions/Person Specifications

A job description and person specification will be drawn up for all posts. The job description will provide a framework of expectations and will define the purpose and key duties and responsibilities of the role.

The person specification will enable applicants to assess themselves for the job and provides a benchmark for judging suitability.

The job description and person specification will be used throughout the recruitment process to develop the shortlisting and selection criteria.

The salary for the job will be determined at this point and the actual salary range will be advertised.

#### 5.1.3 Setting timescales

The length of the recruitment process will vary depending on the type of vacancy, the advertising medium, whether it is necessary to advertise both internally and externally and the length of the required notice periods.

#### 5.1.4 Recruitment Information for perspective Job Applicants

Recruitment Information will vary according to the post but will consist, as a minimum, of:

- Application form
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- The Recruitment and Selection Policy statement
- Privacy Notice (Applicants)

Notes for Applicants Information sheet will be included where appropriate and other recruitment information may also include a Trust prospectus, letter from the Executive/Headteacher or CEO.



### 5.1.5 Visits

Visits prior to application and/or shortlisting will be welcomed outside of school hours to ensure all candidates who wish to visit are able to do so. Such visits will not be conducted by members of the shortlisting or interview panel. Informal telephone conversations prior to application are welcomed. All interviews for teaching posts will include a tour of the school.

## 5.2. Advertising

The Trust will consider the most appropriate methods of advertising any vacant posts and the format for the advert. This may include advertising the post on professional social media sites in addition to other methods e.g. the Trust website and local/national publications.

To ensure equality of opportunity, positions will be advertised internally and/or externally. The circumstances where an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate will include where:

- clear career development and progression paths are being supported;
- there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficient qualified and experienced internal candidates\*;
- the position is for additional responsibilities and not a vacant post;
- staff are at risk of redundancy

\*This may include early career teacher (ECT) posts where there is a reasonable expectation that there is a suitably qualified and experienced internal candidate from Sigma's training provider, Advance Teacher Training, who advertises their courses widely and trainees will have been through a rigorous recruitment and selection process before beginning their training.

Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher posts will be advertised in the manner considered appropriate by the CEO, in order to ensure the widest possible field of candidates. Advertising will usually be national for these roles, unless there is a good reason not to do so.

## 5.3. Application

### 5.3.1 Application Form

A standard application form is used for all vacancies. Alternate format application forms will be accepted from disabled applicants, but such applicants must provide all of the information required by the standard application form. Curriculum vitae's will not be accepted in isolation or in place of a fully completed application form.

All parts of the application form must be completed and the form signed by the candidate. Incomplete application forms will not be accepted and will be returned for completion or checked with the candidate. Where an applicant is shortlisted, any discrepancies or gaps in employment will be discussed at interview.

Applicants should be aware that providing false information could result in the application being rejected or, in summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected.

Where a post is advertised internally only, applicants who wish to apply for a new post will be informed whether an application form must be completed or whether a letter of application is sufficient. Where posts are advertised externally, internal applicants will be expected to apply in the same way as external candidates to ensure equality and fairness.

#### 5.3.2 Recruitment Monitoring Information Form

As part of the application process, individuals may be asked to complete a Recruitment Monitoring Information form. A Privacy Notice (Recruitment Monitoring Form) will be issued alongside the form.

The recruitment monitoring information does not form part of the selection process and is separate from the application. Completion of the form is voluntary.

Completion of the form will ensure that policies and procedures are effective in avoiding discrimination and promoting equality and diversity in recruitment. The information provided will be used for periodic monitoring and statistical data purposes only. Required reporting of this data will be on an anonymous basis.

#### 5.3.3 Acknowledgement

Every effort will be made to update candidates in relation to the status of their application, including acknowledging that their application has been received and if they have not been shortlisted for interview.

### 5.4. Shortlisting

Shortlisting will take place as soon as possible after the closing date. Shortlisting will be undertaken by the selection panel normally consisting of at least two individuals, at least one of whom will be safer recruitment trained.

#### 5.4.1 Invitation to interview

Once the shortlist has been decided, the shortlisted candidates will be notified as soon as possible. Invitation to interview will be confirmed in writing. Adequate time will be allowed between invitation and interview to allow for pre-employment checks to take place and to allow candidates adequate time to prepare for their interview. In exceptional circumstances, for example for critical operational reasons, this timeframe may be shortened.

Full details of the selection process (i.e. details of the interview and any additional selection exercises) will be notified to the applicant in the invitation to interview.

Every effort will be made to accommodate any special requirements/adjustments necessary to enable candidates to participate in the process.

#### 5.4.2 Requesting references

References will normally be taken up on all short-listed candidates, including internal applicants, prior to interview.

In line with statutory guidance, references will be scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed.

References will be required from the candidate's current and/or most recent employer to cover a 5-year period, and where available, at least one reference will relate to the last position which involved working with children

References from an education setting, must be submitted from the headteacher of the establishment or Chair of the Board in the case of headteachers.

In exceptional circumstances, where an applicant has good reason not to want their referees contacted prior to interview, the applicant should set out their reasons within the application form. Where it is agreed, referees will be contacted immediately after interview before an offer of employment is confirmed.

Where a short-listed candidate has previously worked at a Sigma school, a reference will be sought from that school.

For internal candidates at least one reference will be required to cover the applicant's suitability for the advertised role. This could be from a line manager/Head of Department or the Headteacher as appropriate.

#### 5.4.3 Self-declaration of criminal history and prohibitions

Shortlisted candidates will be required to make a declaration of criminal convictions and prohibitions and any relevant positive declarations will be explored with them at interview. Declarations should be submitted in a sealed envelope. The Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement at Appendix A sets out how such declarations will be considered.

Where the school setting and post are covered by the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations, if the candidates declare information on a Disqualification Declaration Form the school will need to establish whether the information declared meets one of the disqualification criteria, in which case the panel may decide to:

- (a) discontinue the recruitment process in respect of that candidate
- (b) allow the candidate time to apply for an Ofsted Waiver



#### 5.4.4 Screening applicants on-line

In line with recommended practice in the statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education", the Trust will conduct searches for information on shortlisted candidates which is publicly available on-line. The purpose is limited:

- (a) to identify issues which call into question the applicant's suitability to work with children;
- (b) to verify employment history.

No candidate or third-party individual will be asked to provide access to on-line information which is not publicly available. No detriment will be applied whether or not an individual has an on-line presence.

Searches will be conducted by an appropriate third-party organisation. Only information related to the purposes stated will be shared with the Panel. Any information will be discussed with candidates at interview before any decisions regarding the recruitment process are made.

### 5.5 Selection process

The selection process will, as a minimum, consist of a face-to-face interview or where circumstances dictate an online interview maybe conducted even where there is only one candidate and including for internal appointments and promotions and volunteers.

Where appropriate, the selection process may include additional activities such as in-tray exercises, group activities, presentations, pupil panels or observed assemblies/teaching.

The process will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements (i.e. job description and person specification), and explore their suitability to work with children.

### 5.6 Employment Offer

The choice of candidate will be determined by the majority view of the interview panel. The panel may identify a first and any reserve choice candidate(s).

The successful applicant will be advised that they are the preferred candidate and a conditional offer made, subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks. A firm offer cannot be made until all pre-employment checks have been completed to the satisfaction of the Trust.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily received, a firm offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment will be issued. The contract will be issued as soon as possible but, in all circumstances, no later than the first day of employment.

If the preferred candidate does not accept the post, the panel will consider the option of contacting any reserve candidate(s). This will only be done where these candidates meet the criteria for the role. In this case, if the reserve candidate wishes to proceed to the preferred candidate a conditional offer will be made subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks as set out above.

Unsuccessful shortlisted candidates will be advised accordingly. Due to the volume of applications received the Trust is unable to provide feedback at shortlisting stage. All shortlisted candidates can request feedback on their interview/selection.

## **5.7. Induction and Integration**

### **5.7.1 Induction**

All new employees and volunteers will be provided with an induction program, which will seek to ensure that they are clear about their job role, the expectations of them in terms of standards of performance and conduct and applicable policies and procedures. Any training and development needs will be identified and supported appropriately.

Where applicable, ECTs will be subject to the Statutory Induction Period.

### **5.7.2 Integration Period**

A probationary period, known within the Trust as an integration period, applies to all newly appointed staff, except those whose appointment arises from a statutory transfer, or move from another Sigma location; or ECTs to whom the Teachers' Statutory Induction Period is applied.

As a Multi Academy Trust, a new employee is an employee who is new to the employment of the Trust (See the New Starter Integration Procedure for more detail).

During the Integration period, new entrants will be expected to establish their suitability for the post.

## **5.8 Record Retention/Data Protection**

### **5.8.1 Selection Records**

Interview notes on all applicants will be retained for a 6-month period, after which time, these records will be destroyed.

Under data protection legislation, applicants have a 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 to the chair of the interview panel/Headteacher within 6 months from the date of interview.

### **5.8.2 Personal File Records**

For the successful candidate, the following information will be retained (where applicable) and will make up part of the employee's personal file:

- Application form
- SD2 (until DBS clearance is received, at which point SD2 should be removed and destroyed)
- Proof of identity

- Evidence of right to work in the UK and any supporting documents
- Proof of required qualifications
- Certificate of good conduct, or equivalent (if applicable)
- Completed pre-employment health declaration form (not full questionnaire, if required)
- Evidence of medical clearance (from the Occupational Health provider, if required)
- DBS consent form
- Evidence of the DBS check or online status check (not DBS Certificate)
- Evidence of DBS Children's Barred list check
- Evidence of prohibition from teaching check (if applicable)
- Evidence of completion of Statutory Induction (Teachers only, where applicable)
- Evidence of s128 directions check (if applicable, e.g. file note confirming check completed)
- Disqualification risk assessment form and any disqualification waiver documentation (where applicable)
- References
- Interview notes
- Online Check certificate along with file notes where applicable.
- Risk assessments where applicable.

Relevant evidence of pre-employment checks will be retained on volunteers, contractors and other workers as required by Statutory Guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Information will be collected, held and processed in accordance with the Trusts data protection policy and record retention schedule.

## 6. Engaging Volunteers

The Trust values the contribution that volunteers make to its community and recognises the positive impact they can have on pupils' learning, experiences and wellbeing.

Volunteers are seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and the same high standards of safer recruitment principles and processes are applied to volunteers as are applied to paid staff.

### 6.1 Interviewing Volunteers

Volunteers will be asked to have a discussion with the Headteacher or other manager prior to commencing their role. This will not be a formal interview but will provide The Trust with:

- an opportunity to explain the workings of the Trust/School and how volunteers fit into that;
- time to ask volunteers for the factual information needed to make a successful placement including any safeguard checks;
- the opportunity to explore their suitability to work with children, including their motivation to work with children and their ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and professional and personal boundaries;

- an opportunity to determine whether any special health, safety and welfare criteria need to be met.

This also provides the volunteer with:

- the opportunity to find out more about the nature of the work;
- information to decide how best they can make a contribution, using their skills and experience;
- how much time they want to commit.

## 6.2 Application Forms

Volunteers will be asked to complete a basic application form. This provides the information necessary to undertake safeguarding checks and to give a picture of the skills and experience the volunteer brings to maximise their contribution and the volunteer's own fulfilment in the assigned activities.

Prospective volunteers will be given the Privacy Notice (Volunteers) prior to completing the volunteer application form.

## 6.3 Role Profiles

Volunteers will be given clear and simple description of the roles and boundaries of the voluntary activity.

It is acknowledged that by its very nature, volunteering does not place the same obligations on an individual in terms of attendance etc. as a paid employee. However, it is very much hoped that volunteers will fulfil their commitment as agreed between themselves and the Trust- this includes consistent attendance and undertaking the agreed tasks. Volunteers may be asked to sign a voluntary agreement as clarification of the commitment they are making to the Trust and vice versa.

## 7. Agency Staff and other workers

It is expected that the same standards of safer recruitment will be applied by external bodies providing workers or volunteers to the Trust.

External bodies will be required to provide written confirmation that relevant safer recruitment and other relevant pre-employment checks have been undertaken and this will be recorded on the Single Central Record. A copy of the written confirmation will be retained on a central file within the relevant school.

Next Review Date: Summer 2027

## Appendix A - Recruitment and Selection Policy Statement

1. The Trust is committed to:

- safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety, and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, of children and young people;
- promoting equality of opportunity and community cohesion where the diversity of different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs;

and expects all staff, volunteers and other workers to share this commitment. It is recognised that this can only be achieved through sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.

2. The Trust recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds, with different skills and abilities. We are committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. Selection will be on the basis of merit and ability, assessed against the qualifications, skills and competencies required to do the job. We will uphold obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, sex, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy, gender re-assignment, disability or health, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic origin), religion or belief.
3. We will implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or who is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the role.
4. We will ensure that the terms of any contract with a contractor or agency requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure. We will monitor the compliance with these measures and require evidence that relevant checks have been undertaken for all workers deployed.
5. The following pre-employment checks will be required where applicable to the role and setting:
- receipt of satisfactory references
  - verification of identity
  - a satisfactory DBS disclosure if undertaking Regulated Activity
  - verification that you are not barred from working with Children
  - verification that you are not prohibited from teaching
  - verification of medical fitness
  - verification of qualifications
  - verification of professional status where required e.g. QTS status
  - the production of evidence of the right to work in the UK
  - verification of successful completion of/exemption from statutory induction period



- verification that you are not subject to any s128 directions preventing you from holding a management position within a school/trust
- a declaration that you are not disqualified from working with children by virtue of the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 or that you have provided a disqualification waiver from Ofsted
- Verification of an overseas check where a person has lived abroad for a period of 3 months or more, in the ten years before their application, while aged 16 or over.

NB It is illegal for anyone who is barred from working with children to apply for, or undertake, Regulated Activity.

6. We will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, in line with the current DfE requirements.
7. All posts/voluntary roles that give substantial unsupervised access to children and young people are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to declare spent and unspent convictions, cautions and bind overs (save for those offences that are subject to filtering by the Police) prior to their offer of employment being confirmed. When making a recruitment decision the Trust will disregard any filtered convictions/cautions/reprimands which were disclosed in error.

Applicants will be required to sign a DBS consent form giving consent for some of the DBS certificate details to be copied and shared (within strict guidelines) for the purposes of considering suitability for employment and consent for an online status check to be carried out in the event that the applicant subscribes to the DBS update service. A previously issued Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate will only be accepted in certain restricted circumstances or where you subscribe to the DBS update service and the appropriate online status checks have been satisfactory.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that people who have convictions / cautions / reprimands on their record are treated fairly and given every opportunity to establish their suitability for positions. Having a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to obtaining a position, except in the case of Trust settings covered by the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018 where certain convictions, cautions or warnings will mean an individual is disqualified from working in that setting and will prohibit employment at the Trust (unless a waiver can be obtained from Ofsted).

Positive disclosures will be managed on a case by case basis taking into account the nature, seriousness and relevance to the role. The following factors will be considered in each case:

- The seriousness/level of the disclosed information e.g. was it a caution or a conviction.
- How long ago the incident(s) occurred and whether it was a one-off incident or part of a repeat history/pattern.
- The circumstances of the offence(s) being committed and any changes in the applicant's personal circumstances since then.
- The country where the offence/caution occurred.
- Whether the individual shows or has shown genuine remorse.

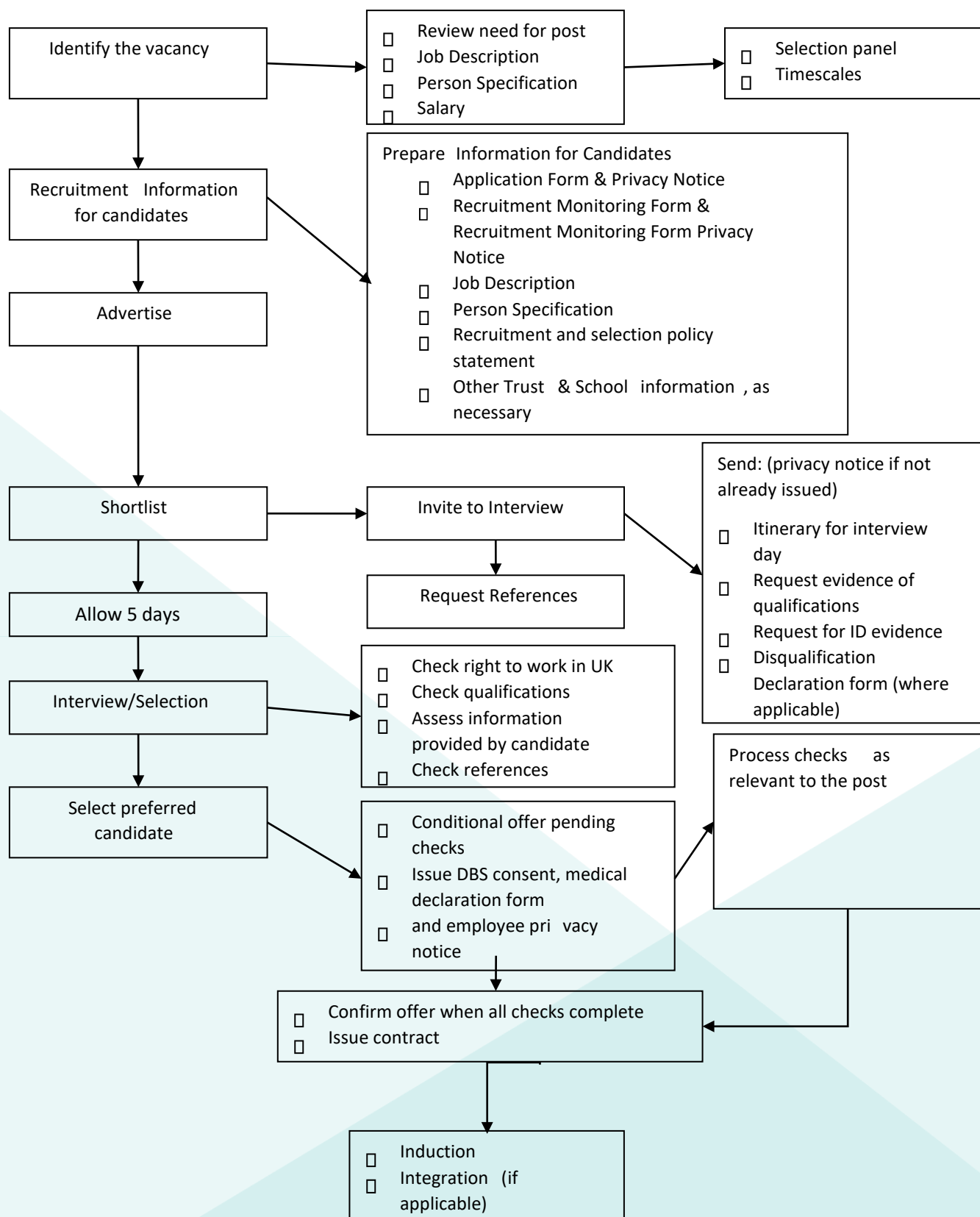
- If the offences were self-disclosed or not (non-disclosure could, in itself, result in non-confirmation of employment on the grounds of trust, honesty and openness).

This Trust operates in accordance with The Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice in relation to the processing, handling and security of Disclosure information

8. In line with recommended practice in the statutory guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education", the school will conduct searches for information on shortlisted candidates which is publicly available on-line. The purpose is limited:
  - to identify issues which call into question the applicant's suitability to work with children;
  - to verify employment history.
9. The Trust processes personal data collected during the recruitment process in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected as part of recruitment process is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the recruitment procedure. On the conclusion of the procedure, data collected will be held in accordance with the Trust's retention schedule.

A copy of our Recruitment Procedure is available upon request.

## Appendix B - Summary of Recruitment Procedure



## Ownership and Control

### History

Version	Author	Dated	Status	Details
1	HHo	09-Nov-18	Approved	New policy adopted from ECC
2	HHo	08-Oct-19	Approved	Annual review - amendments in line with ECC
3	HHo	17-Mar-21	Approved	Annual review - amendments in line with Juniper Education (formerly ECC Education HR). Sigma Updates to 5.2 and 5.4
4	BMa	Jan-23	Approved	Reviewed with Scheme of Delegation v13
5	SPa	Nov-24	Approved	Clarification of the time frame for overseas checks – Appendix A.
6	SPa/DKi	Jul-25	Approved	General updates in line with Juniper model policy