

Recruitment and Selection Policy

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Opening minds, raising expectations, transforming lives. This is the vision of the Woodard Academies Trust, a partnership of six schools whose geographical span extends from Tynemouth in the North of England to West Sussex in the South.

Wisdom, Ambition, Unity, Trust, Faith. These are the Trust's values. They reflect the Christian ethos, beliefs and foundation of the Trust and the wider Woodard group of schools.

We are ambitious for every young person, irrespective of background, and committed to preparing and equipping each pupil with the academic and life skills to pursue a chosen career, develop strong relationships, become lifelong learners and make a positive contribution to local communities and society as a whole. We welcome pupils and families from all faiths and none.

Great teachers change lives. We are resolute in our aim to recruit, develop and retain the best teachers, leaders and support staff.

Our intention is that every policy supports staff, pupils, academy councils, the executive and trustees to develop, improve and learn together to meet our ambitious goals.

This policy supports this vision and these values by setting out how we recruit and select staff to the Trust. This ensures clarity and transparency of processes.

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2	Scope and Purpose	3
3	Safer Recruitment	4
4	Advertising	4
5	Job Description	5
6	Applications and Shortlisting	5
7	Applicants invited for interview	5
8	Interviews	7
9	Other selection methods	8
10	Level of language proficiency	8
11	Pre-employment checks	9
12	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks - new employees and volunteers	10
13	Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks - existing employees and volunteers	12
14	Agency staff	12
15	Breaches of the policy	13
16	Record keeping and data protection	13
17	Review of policy	13
	Appendix 1: Disqualification from Childcare information for new employees	14

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Recruiting the best people to our Trust is vital for our continued success in providing the highest standards of education to our pupils.
- 1.2 Not appointing the right people to our roles can have a negative impact on the performance of our Trust.
- 1.3 The appropriate senior manager at each academy or from the central team is responsible for deciding on the arrangements to recruit to any post, with the exception of (i) the Principal, where the CEO will be responsible, and (ii) the CEO, where the Chair of Trustees will be responsible.
- 1.4 In carrying out our recruitment processes we:
 - 1.4.1 are committed to the creation of a safe environment for our pupils by operating safer recruitment practices in line with the statutory requirements and guidance.
 - 1.4.2 will comply with the requirements of **Data Protection Legislation** (being the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018) and any implementing laws, regulations and secondary legislation, as amended or updated from time to time.
 - 1.4.3 have due regard to our Data Protection Policy which sets out how we will comply with Data Protection Legislation.
 - 1.4.4 will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010) and are committed to ensuring that throughout our recruitment and selection processes no applicant is disadvantaged or discriminated against because of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.
- 1.5 In the very exceptional cases where we are required to discriminate due to an occupational requirement this must be approved by the Academy Council/Board of Trustees who will provide reasons for this requirement.
- 1.6 Recruitment will be solely on the basis of the applicant's abilities and individual merit as measured against the criteria for the job. Qualifications, knowledge, experience and skills will be assessed at the level that is relevant to the job.
- 1.7 If an applicant makes the Trust aware, at any stage of the recruitment process, that they have a disability then reasonable adjustments will be considered to ensure the applicant is not disadvantaged by the process.

2 Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out our processes for recruiting, selecting and appointing any employee to work within our Trust.
- 2.2 Sections 12 and 13 on Disclosure and Barring Service checks also apply to volunteers in our Trust.

3 Safer Recruitment

- 3.1 All recruitment must be in line with this policy to ensure that we identify, deter and prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with our pupils.
- 3.2 The recruitment of all applicants and volunteers to our Trust must, without exception, follow the processes of safer recruitment. All offers of employment or of a voluntary role will be subject to us being satisfied that the applicant or volunteer is a suitable person to work with children and young people.
- 3.3 Any person involved in recruiting to our Trust must read the latest "Keeping children safe in education" guidance (or updated statutory guidance) produced by the DfE and our Trust's child protection policy. These can be obtained from the WAT Staff Portal.
- 3.4 All recruitment must be planned to ensure that there is adequate time available to recruit safely.
- 3.5 Any person who becomes aware that this policy is not being followed during recruitment must inform the Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead or HR Lead for the setting immediately.
- 3.6 All of the checks described in Sections 11 and 12 must be carried out and determined as satisfactory before an applicant can start their employment in the Trust. Where this is not possible, a risk assessment will be undertaken.

4 Advertising

- 4.1 Any vacant position will normally be advertised on MyNewTerm to ensure the most appropriate field of applicants is obtained.
- 4.2 All advertisements will have the following statement about safeguarding children and young people and the requirement to have a DBS check:

Woodard Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All offers of employment are subject to an Enhanced DBS check, and where applicable, a prohibition from teaching check will be completed for all applicants.

- 4.3 All advertisements will also include the following statement if the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013, 2020 and 2023:

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013, 2020 & 2023). This means that certain convictions and cautions are considered 'protected' and do not need to be disclosed to employers, and if they are disclosed, employers cannot take them into account. Guidance about whether a conviction or caution should be disclosed can be found on the Ministry of Justice website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974>.

- 4.4 Under Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016, the Public Sector fluency duty requires state funded schools to ensure candidates for their customer facing roles have the necessary standard of

spoken English (or English or Welsh in Wales). For example, a teaching assistant required to communicate with pupils to support their learning, would be viewed as operating in a public-facing role. Adverts (and Job Descriptions) should make clear the necessary standard of spoken English or Welsh required for the role.

- 4.5 All applicants will be provided with a copy of our Job Application Privacy Promise via 'My New Term' which sets out how we will gather, process and hold personal data of individuals during and after the recruitment process.

5 Job Description

- 5.1 A job description setting out the duties and responsibilities of the post will be required for all posts. It must be up to date, accurate and specific to the role. The job description must also include a person specification which outlines all of the necessary skills, abilities, experience, attitude, behaviours, qualifications and knowledge requirements for the post.
- 5.2 All job descriptions and person specifications must refer to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

6 Applications and Shortlisting

- 6.1 All applicants are required to fill out our standard application form. CVs are not accepted, unless they are supplied as supplementary information to the application form.
- 6.2 Applicants will be short-listed against the requirements of the person specification. Where possible the same people should carry out the short-listing and the interviews. The short-listing panel should consist of at least two people. The outcome of the short-listing process will be recorded and retained.
- 6.3 The equal opportunities monitoring form must be removed from the application and not provided to the short-listing panel.
- 6.4 The short-listing panel is responsible for scrutinising the application forms and identifying any gaps in employment or other areas that may affect an applicant's suitability to work with children and young people. A satisfactory explanation for any concerns, including any online concerns as a result of online searches via Google which is part of Keeping Children Safe in Education, must be obtained from the applicant during the interview process. The Google search for short-listed candidates will be completed prior to interview.

7 Applicants invited for interview

- 7.1 Once the shortlisting panel has determined applicants to be invited to interview the following checks must take place:
- 7.2 All offers of employment will be conditional upon receipt of at least two satisfactory written references. References will:
 - 7.2.1 be requested for all shortlisted applicants where possible;

- 7.2.2 include the applicant's current or most recent employer and where an applicant for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, will include the applicant's most recent employer as a teacher where applicable;
 - 7.2.3 ask the current employer for details of any capability history in the previous two years, and the reasons for this;
 - 7.2.4 be directly from the referee, who will be a senior person with appropriate authority and confirmed as accurate by the manager/principal in respect of any disciplinary investigations, where a candidate is moving from another school, one reference must always be from the Principal
 - 7.2.5 not be accepted if they are 'to whom it may concern' letters;
 - 7.2.6 request information on the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people from the last employer where the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children);
 - 7.2.7 be verified with the person who provided the reference and, where the reference is provided electronically, verify that it is from a legitimate source;
 - 7.2.8 be clarified with the referee where the information is vague or insufficient;
 - 7.2.9 establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post;
 - 7.2.10 be compared with the information set out in the application form and any discrepancies discussed with the candidate;
 - 7.2.11 be requested before the interview. If candidates do not wish their current employer to know they are going for an interview for another job, in which case, we should take up a reference from an alternative referee. However, if an offer is made then we must have a reference from the current employer.
 - 7.2.12 be explored further with the referee and with the applicant during the interview if necessary.
- 7.3 Where it has not been possible to obtain references before the interview any concerns that are subsequently raised will need to be resolved before the appointment is confirmed.
 - 7.4 In order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, information relating to sickness absence will only be requested after a conditional offer of employment has been made.
 - 7.5 The Academy/Trust will conduct searches, either themselves or through a third party, of the online presence and publicly available information via a google search of shortlisted candidates to identify any comment, image or other content that could cause reputational damage to the trust and/or give rise to a safeguarding concern. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks when they are invited to interview.
 - 7.6 Management of online searches (either by carrying out the search or instructing a third party to do so), and the collation of information will be carried out independently from those managing the shortlisting process. Only information relevant to potential reputational damage and/or

safeguarding concerns obtained from the search will be passed to those managing the shortlisting process.

- 7.7 Shortlisted candidates will be required to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record for information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Applicants will only be asked to disclose and discuss criminal convictions and/or cautions which are not protected under the amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013,2020 & 2023) that may deem them unsuitable. Where this is provided electronically, the shortlisted candidate will be asked to physically sign a hard copy at the point of the interview.

8 Interviews

- 8.1 A face-to-face interview must take place for all applicants to all posts. The use of video conferencing is acceptable for this purpose.
- 8.2 All those involved in interviewing must be properly prepared to undertake the role, which may involve appropriate interview training. At least one person on the interview panel must have passed the appropriate safer recruitment training. Interviewers must also declare any conflicts of interest, where a conflict of interests exists, the person must withdraw themselves from the panel, Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.
- 8.3 The purpose of the interview is to assess the merits of each applicant against the job description and person specification to establish their suitability for the post and to work with children and young people.
- 8.4 Interviews should be conducted with a minimum of two interviewers, preferably three in case of a split decision on the panel ideally with an equal gender balance. Notes will be taken at interviews and will be saved for a period of six months for unsuccessful candidates and saved on the personnel file of the successful candidate.
- 8.5 Before the interview commences the interview panel should have:
- 8.5.1 prepared appropriate questions for the role;
 - 8.5.2 prepared appropriate questions to test the applicant's suitability to work with children and young people;
 - 8.5.3 identified any areas for further probing, e.g. if a criminal record has been declared, any information about past disciplinary action/allegations, or if there are gaps in employment anything that you have identified on the Google search;
 - 8.5.4 agreed assessment criteria which reflects the person specification; and
 - 8.5.5 decided a structure to the interview and established which member of the panel will ask which questions.
- 8.6 A set of common questions relating to the requirements of the post will be asked of each applicant. Their response will determine whether that is followed up through further questioning.
- 8.7 Any gaps in employment history must be explored during the interview process.
- 8.8 Candidates shortlisted for interview will be asked about their suitability to work with children.

Areas that may be concerning and lead to further questions include:

- implication that adults and children are equal;
- lack of recognition and/or understanding of the vulnerability of children;
- inappropriate idealisation of children;
- inadequate understanding of appropriate boundaries between adults and children; and
- indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours;

8.9 The interview panel must ensure a fully completed self-declaration form is considered and discussed where appropriate. In the event of a disclosure being made, either on the form or verbally by the applicant, the panel must document the discussion.

9 Other selection methods

9.1 In addition to a face to face interview with the interview panel a variety of other selection methods may be used, such as:

9.1.1 Observation of teaching practice in the academy or in the applicant's current school or academy;

9.1.2 One or more additional panel interviews

9.1.3 A presentation;

9.1.4 In tray exercises; and

9.1.5 Psychometric testing.

9.2 Those responsible for deciding the arrangements for recruitment to a specific post will determine the selection method(s). They will be relevant and appropriate to the role and will be based on the requirements for the particular post as set out in the job description and person specification.

9.3 Candidates will be informed in advance if any selection methods are to be used in addition to a face to face interview and what these are.

10 Level of language proficiency

10.1 Under the "fluency duty" (Part 7 of the Immigration Act 2016), public authorities are required to ensure that workers in public facing roles are fluent in English (or Welsh in Wales). Public facing roles are those members of teaching and support staff who, as a regular and intrinsic part of their role, are required to speak to members of the public (including students in schools).

10.2 The Trust will accept a range of evidence of spoken English or Welsh language ability as follows:

- competently answering interview questions in English or Welsh;
- possessing a relevant qualification for the role attained as part of education in the UK or

- fully taught in English or Welsh by a recognised institution abroad, passing an English or Welsh spoken language competency test or possessing a relevant spoken English or Welsh qualification at CEFR Level B1 or above, taught in English or Welsh by a recognised institution abroad (and from September 2017 this includes Welsh second language GCSE).

11 Pre-employment checks – Paid employment

11.1 An offer of appointment to the successful applicant will be conditional upon the following:

- 11.1.1 receipt of at least two satisfactory written references (one of which must be their current or most recent employer, in the case of candidates who have been employed in education, one reference must be from the Principal/Head teacher);
- 11.1.2 verification of the applicant's identity, from current photographic ID, birth certificate and proof of address, where a candidate has changed their name since birth, a copy of the marriage certificate or deed poll document must be copied and retained;
- 11.1.3 verification of the applicant's medical fitness;
- 11.1.4 verification of qualifications where relevant;
- 11.1.5 verification of professional status where applicable. For teachers, this will include checking that the individual has the required teaching qualification and has successfully completed any statutory induction, if required, through the Teacher Services System;
- 11.1.6 satisfactory enhanced DBS check (see Section 12);
- 11.1.7 satisfactory online searches (see section 8);
- 11.1.8 for management positions (applicable to Trustees, Academy Council members Principals, members of the Senior Leadership Team including Business Managers and departmental heads), verification that they are not subject to a section 128 direction by checking the Teacher Services System; a check must also be done for staff with financial responsibility;
- 11.1.9 for teachers and other employees who hold QTS who are working in non-teaching roles, verification that they are not subject to a prohibition order by checking the Teacher Services System;
- 11.1.10 for teachers, satisfactory check to determine any restrictions/sanctions that have been imposed in other countries for anyone who has lived or worked abroad in the last five years for six months or more, through the provision of a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country that they qualified. ¹
- 11.1.11 a clear children's barred list check (for those in regulated activity);
- 11.1.12 verification of right to work in the United Kingdom;
- 11.1.13 any further checks where the applicant has lived or work outside of the UK for five years or more for more than six months including receipt of criminal record information from overseas;

¹ EEA restrictions do not bar individuals from teaching in England, but employers should consider the reasons for

the restriction when assessing suitability

11.1.14 confirmation that the applicant is not disqualified from providing childcare²

11.2 All checks must be confirmed in writing, retained on the personnel file and recorded on the single central record (SCR).

12 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks - new employees and volunteers

12.1 The Trust will carry out a risk assessment to determine if a DBS check is required for each volunteer in accordance with Annex E of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. All employees require a DBS check. If a volunteer is assessed as requiring a DBS check, the following DBS checks will be undertaken for new appointments, before the employee or volunteer starts work:

Who?	Definition	Type of check
Employees who will be engaging in regulated activity	<p>As an educational institution which is exclusively or mainly for the provision of full-time education to children, Woodard Academies Trust is an establishment specified in the relevant legislation. Activity carried out in this establishment will therefore be regulated activity relating to children if it meets the definition in the relevant legislation, including that it is carried out:</p> <p>Frequently by the same person (for example once a week or more); or</p> <p>On more than three days in any period of 30 days.</p> <p>Note – personal care of a child because of age, illness or disability including physical help with eating, toileting, washing, bathing or dressing is always regulated activity regardless of how frequently it is carried out.</p>	An enhanced DBS check with children's barred list check will be obtained
Unsupervised volunteers	As above	<p>An enhanced DBS check with children's barred list check will be obtained for:</p> <p>Those applying for Chair of Academy Council/Trustee posts (after 01.04.17) must also have their identity verified for a</p>

² This will apply where the school academy runs its own before or after school clubs or activities for children

up to the age of 8 or provides education for children up to the age of 5. See appendix 1.

		<p>stipulated professional as part of their DBS check as per the below link:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/identity-verification-for-new-chairs-of-trustees</p>
Supervised volunteers	<p>Where an individual is a volunteer (e.g. carrying out activity that is unpaid) they will not be engaging in regulated activity if:</p> <p>They are being supervised by someone that is in regulated activity; and</p> <p>The supervision is regular and day to day (e.g. it is ongoing); and</p> <p>The supervision is reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children (this may take into account for example, the age (including the variation in ages), number and vulnerability of children the individual is working with, the nature of the work and opportunity for contact with children, whether other individuals are helping to look after them and how many workers a supervisor is supervising).</p>	<p>We are unable by law to obtain a barred list check on a supervised volunteer. We will however obtain an enhanced DBS check (with no barred list check) for supervised volunteers.</p>

- 12.2 In exceptional circumstances only, a new employee or unsupervised volunteer may be able to start before the enhanced DBS check has been received, but not before the children's barred list check has been completed. The recruiting manager must ensure that appropriate supervision is in place until the DBS check has been received.
- 12.3 DBS certificates will only be issued to the applicant. All applicants must produce the original disclosure certificate prior to starting in post. The disclosure will be scrutinised to ensure it is authentic and to detect any fraud. The DBS disclosure number and date of the check will be recorded in the Single Central Record (SCR). You are not required to take a copy of the DBS certificate; however, we may choose to do so for decision making purposes. Any copy will be held for no longer than necessary, and up to a period of six months and be processed in line with Data Protection Legislation.
- 12.4 Any applicant who refuses to produce their DBS disclosure will not be able to start work at the Trust and the conditional offer will be withdrawn as satisfactory checks are not in place. Any

volunteer who refuses to produce their disclosure will not be able to volunteer in any of the Trust's Academies or Offices.

- 12.5 Applicants can have their DBS certificate kept up to date and take it with them from role to role where the same type and level of check is required. Applicants or volunteers should be asked if they have subscribed to this service. The cost of this service is £13 per year (free for volunteers). The expectation is that individuals personally fund this if required. Where the applicant or volunteer has subscribed they should provide the Trust with the original disclosure document to be verified and the Trust will check the online update for any changes.
- 12.6 Applicants will only be asked to declare convictions and cautions that are not protected under the amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013, 2020 & 2023).
- 12.7 Information relating to an individual's criminal record will only be shared with the relevant people to enable the Trust to make a decision about their suitability to work with children and young people.

13 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks - existing employees and volunteers

- 13.1 An enhanced DBS check and a children's barred list check will be carried out for all existing staff and unsupervised volunteers (subject to risk assessment) where their contact with children or young people has increased from that at their time of appointment.
- 13.2 An enhanced DBS and children's barred list check may be carried out on any employee or unsupervised volunteer (subject to risk assessment) where the Trust has concerns about an individual's suitability to work with children and young people. An enhanced DBS (no barred list check) may be carried out on any supervised volunteer (subject to risk assessment) where the Trust has concerns about their suitability to work with children and young people.
- 13.3 DBS certificates will only be issued to the applicant. The Trust expects all applicants to produce the disclosure prior to the start date for the post. Any existing employee who does not produce their DBS disclosure will be managed through the disciplinary procedure.
- 13.4 All existing employees are required to inform us immediately if they are the subject of a police investigation or receive any conviction or caution which is not protected under the amendments to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (2013, 2020 & 2023) or any occurrence that may disqualify them from providing childcare under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009. Failure to immediately report such information will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Action may be taken as a result of any change or any failure to inform the Trust of any change.

14 Agency staff

- 14.1 In the case of agency staff, the Trust must ensure that the arrangement with the agency imposes an obligation on the agency to carry out all recruitment checks as set out in section 12, including DBS and children's barred list checks, that the Trust would otherwise complete for its staff. The Trust must obtain written confirmation from the agency that these checks have been carried out and are satisfactory. This must be recorded in the single central record (SCR).

- 14.2 Upon the engagement of an agency worker, the agency must be supplied with a copy of the Trust's policy on managing safeguarding concerns and allegations (appendix 3 of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy) unless they have previously been provided with the most recent version of this procedure.

15 Breaches of the policy

- 15.1 Any instances of this policy not being adhered to will be taken very seriously and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.
- 15.2 Any complaint in relation to this policy, including its application will be managed through the Trust's complaints policy or grievance policy (for existing employees).

16 Record keeping and data protection

- 16.1 All written records of interviews, application forms and reasons for appointment or non-appointment will be kept by the Trust in line with our Job Application Privacy Promise, Data Protection Policy and Data Retention Guidance, and in line with the requirements of Data Protection Legislation.

17 Review of policy

- 17.1 This policy is reviewed annually by the Trust (to take into account any changes to KCSIE) We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.

Appendix 1: Disqualification from Childcare information for new employees

This information is to make you aware of your obligations relating to disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 which came into force in schools and academies in late 2014.

Your role within our school has been identified as one which the disqualification declaration applies to.

What does this mean in practice?

We need to make you aware that there are certain things that may mean that you are automatically disqualified from providing childcare (affecting your role within this school) by you having committed a disqualifiable offence or a disqualifying event. These broadly fall into the four below categories:

- 1 That you have a caution/conviction for certain violent/sexual offences
- 2 Grounds relating to the care of children
- 3 That you have had registration refused/cancelled in relation to childcare
- 4 That you have committed an offence overseas which would constitute an offence regarding disqualification under the 2009 Regulations if it had been done in any part of the UK.

Ofsted have provided a list of disqualifiable offences/events in tables A & B of the below guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006>

You need to read through this and report to the Principal without delay if there is anything to declare under the disqualification guidance. It is only the offences/events on this list that we require you to declare. If you are unsure of a specific offence/event is applicable after reading the Ofsted lists, then please let us know so that we can advise you appropriately.

You should also be aware that from this point forward if your circumstances change relating to the disqualification guidance, you are obligated to inform us of this without delay.

You will be required to sign to confirm that you are clear relating to your obligations regarding disclosure pertaining to Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2016, so please do make sure that you ask any questions that you are unclear on. If you wish to do this, please speak with the Principal in person.

If you require additional information or help with any aspect of this, then please let the Principal know so that we can take advice from our HR provider on your behalf.

I have read and understood the information in this document.

Signed

Print name

Date