



SOLIHULL

Recruitment & Selection Policy

Owner: HR Manager

Reviewer: HR Manager & Assistant HR Manager

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Version 10

The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education.

Solihull School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in its care. As an employer, the school expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the Recruitment & Selection Policy are to help deter, reject or identify people who might abuse pupils or are otherwise unsuited to working with them by having appropriate procedures for appointing staff. Specifically, they are as follows:

- to recruit staff that share and understand our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in education;
- to ensure that the best possible staff are recruited on the basis of their merits, abilities and suitability for the position;
- to ensure that all job applicants are considered equally and consistently;
- to ensure that no job applicant is treated unfairly on any grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or religious belief, sex or sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability or age;
- to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, recommendations and guidance including the statutory guidance published by the Department for Education (DfE) - Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2023, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2016 (the Prevent Duty Guidance) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); and
- to ensure that the school meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

The school has a principle of open competition in its approach to recruitment and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualification, experience and merit as measured against the Job Description and Person Specification.

The recruitment and selection of staff will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or familial relationship with an applicant, they must declare it as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process wherever possible.

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURE

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the school will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of applicant as possible. Normally this entails an external advertisement.

Any advertisement will make clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Candidates for employed posts will receive a Job Description and Person Specification for the role applied for.

All documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially in accordance with the relevant Data Protection law.

Application Forms

Solihull School uses its own application form and all applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and full employment history and their suitability for the role. In addition, all applicants are required to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history.

Incomplete application forms will not be shortlisted. Curriculum Vitae's will not be considered without an accompanying application form.

All roles involve opportunity for access to children. It is therefore important that accurate answers are provided.

All queries about the School's Application Form and recruitment process should be directed to the HR Department.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

All Job Descriptions will clearly and accurately set out the duties and responsibilities of the job role.

The Person Specification informs the selection decision, by ensuring that the applicant demonstrates that they have the required skills, experience, qualifications and knowledge. The Person Specification will include a specific reference to suitability to work with children.

References

References for shortlisted applicants will be requested prior to interview. The only exception is where an applicant has indicated on their application form that they do not wish their current employer to be contacted at that stage. In such cases, this reference will be taken up immediately after interview.

All offers of employment will be subject to the receipt of a minimum of two references which are considered satisfactory by the school. One of the references must be from the applicant's current or most recent employer. If the current / most recent employment does / did not involve work with children, then the second reference should be from the employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children (where relevant).

References will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee and their purpose is to provide objective and factual information to support appointment decisions.

All referees will be asked whether they believe the applicant is suitable for the job for which they have applied and whether they have any reason to believe that the applicant is unsuitable to work with children. Referees will also be asked to confirm that the applicant has not been radicalised and that they do not support terrorism or any form of "extremism".

No questions will be asked about health or medical fitness prior to any offer of employment being made.

Dates of employment as detailed within references are compared against the application form and any discrepancies or anomalies will be followed up.

The school does not accept open references, testimonials or references from family members.

Where references are received electronically, the school will ensure they are received from a legitimate source.

Suitability to Work with Children – Self-Declaration Form

All applicants invited to attend an interview will be required to complete a self-declaration form prior to attendance at interview regarding convictions and their suitability to work with children, and will make it clear that the post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

It is unlawful for the school 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 apply for a position at the school. All applicants will be made aware that providing false information is an offence and could result in the application being rejected or summary dismissal if the applicant has been selected, as well as referral to the police and/or the DBS.

Online Searches on shortlisted candidate

The school will undertake an online search for any applicant invited to attend an interview.

The purpose of the online search is to identify any incidents or issues which may cause concern regarding an applicant's suitability to work with children.

The online search will be conducted by a member of staff not involved in the interview process, and they will follow set parameters for the search criteria. A written record will be made of the findings, which will be retained in accordance with the school's Privacy Notice.

The online search will be undertaken prior to interview, with the Chair of the interview panel being informed of any issues that have been identified so that they can be discussed with the applicant.

Interviews

Applicants will be shortlisted according to the relevance and applicability of their professional attributes and personal qualities to the role. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail.

Shortlisted candidates will have been asked to complete a self-declaration form, where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should subsequently physically sign a hard copy.

There will be a face-to-face interview wherever possible, and a minimum of two interviewers will see the applicants for the vacant position.

Each interview panel will be chaired by a senior member of staff. This will normally be the Headmaster, Bursar, Head of the Preparatory School, Head of the Senior School, an Assistant or Deputy Head or HR Manager. The Chair of Governors should chair the panel for the Head and Bursar's appointment.

The interview process will explore the applicant's ability to carry out the Job Description and meet the Person Specification. It will enable the panel to explore any anomalies or gaps have been identified in order to satisfy themselves that the chosen applicant can meet the safeguarding criteria.

Any information in regard to past disciplinary action or allegations, cautions or convictions will be discussed and considered in the circumstance of the individual case during the interview process, if it has not been disclosed on the application form.

At least one member of any interviewing panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training or refresher training as applicable.

Candidates with a disability who are invited to interview should inform the school of any necessary reasonable adjustments or arrangements to assist them in attending the interview.

OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKS

In accordance with the recommendations set out in KCSIE and the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 the school carries out a number of pre-employment checks in respect of all prospective employees (including under a contract of employment, a contract for services or otherwise than under a contract, but excluding volunteers).

If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- the agreement of a provisional start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the school's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- complete employment history, with satisfactory explanation for any gaps;
- verification of the applicant's identity (where that has not previously been verified) and qualifications;
- A current driving licence including a photograph and paper counterpart or a passport and a full birth certificate;
- A utility bill or financial statement issued within the last three months showing the candidate's current name and address;
- Where appropriate any documentation evidencing a change of name;
- Proof of entitlement to work and reside in the UK.

Originals of the above are necessary. Photocopies or certified copies are not sufficient.

- the receipt of two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer, where applicable) which the school considers to be satisfactory;
- for positions which involve teaching*, the applicant must not be subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State (or any preceding or succeeding body);
 - *Teaching work is defined in the Teachers' Disciplinary (England) Regulations 2012 to encompass:
 - Planning and preparing lessons and courses for pupils;
 - Delivering and preparing lessons to pupils;
 - Assessing the development, progress and attainment of pupils;
 - Reporting on the development, progress and attainment of pupils.
- the receipt of an enhanced disclosure from the DBS which the school considers to be satisfactory;
- where the position is undertaking "regulated activity" confirmation that the applicant is not named on the Children's Barred List;
- Where providing childcare to children under 8, applicants are required to confirm that they are not disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006, Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, via the provision of a signed declaration (which is required annually in September following commencement of employment);
- Where the applicant will be taking part in the management of the school, a check will be carried out under section 128 of the Independent Educational Provision in England (Prohibition on Participation in Management) Regulations 2014. This applies to all governors, senior leadership team and teaching heads of department;
- verification of the applicant's medical fitness for the role;
- verification of the applicant's right to work in the UK;
- any further checks which are necessary as a result of the applicant having lived or worked outside of the UK. A criminal record check will be requested where the applicant has lived or worked overseas for 3 months or more in the previous 5 years. Other checks may be undertaken, and will be reasonable and proportionate depending on the circumstances. Further details can be found below.

Proof of identity and Right to Work in the UK

The school completes a check of all staff members' eligibility to work in the UK in accordance with Home Office requirements.

Where an applicant claims to have changed their name by deed poll or any other means (e.g., marriage, adoption, statutory declaration) they will be required to provide documentary evidence of the change.

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and Dealing with Convictions

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 does not apply to positions which involve working

with, or having access to pupils. Any convictions and cautions that would normally be considered 'spent' must be declared when applying for any position at Solihull School.

Where a conviction, caution, final warning or reprimand is disclosed as part of the application process, the interview panel will consider the nature, seriousness and relevance of the offence, how long ago the offence occurred, whether the offence was a 'one-off' or part of a history of offending, changes in circumstances, decriminalisation and remorse.

In the event that relevant information (whether in relation to previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a disclosure check, the Chair of the interview panel, supported by the Human Resources Manager will evaluate all of the risk factors above before a position is offered or confirmed. In these circumstances, the Chair of the interview panel would undertake a formal meeting with the applicant before continuing with the recruitment process.

If an applicant wishes to dispute any information contained in a disclosure, they may do so by contacting the DBS. In cases where the applicant would otherwise be offered a position were it not for the disputed information, the school may, where practicable and at its discretion, defer a final decision about the appointment until the applicant has had a reasonable opportunity to challenge the disclosure information.

It is unlawful for the school to employ anyone who is included on the lists maintained by the DBS of individuals who it considered unsuitable to work with children. In addition, it is also unlawful for the school to employ anyone who is the subject of a disqualifying order made on being convicted or charged with the following offences against children: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence. It is also unlawful for the school to knowingly employ someone who works in the relevant settings and is disqualified from providing childcare under the Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006, Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and the Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018.

Successful applicants should be aware that they are required to notify the School immediately if there are any reasons why they should not be working with children.

Staff and/or successful candidates who are disqualified from childcare or registration may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such individuals may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of the setting, unless and until such waiver is confirmed.

Members of staff at Solihull School are aware of their obligation to inform the Headmaster, the Bursar or the HR Department of any cautions or convictions that arise since their original DBS check was obtained during the course of their employment. This is in accordance with the Declaration of Relevant Information during Employment Policy, as contained within the HR Handbook.

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Certificate

The school applies for an enhanced disclosure for all prospective staff. This would also include a check of the Children's Barred List where the applicant is to be engaged in regulated activity as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended).

If any DBS disclosure has been requested but has not been received prior to the commencement of employment, a short period of work is permitted under controlled conditions at the Headmaster's discretion. Where the Headmaster permits such an arrangement to commence, a risk assessment is undertaken and reviewed every 2 weeks detailing the safeguards that have been put in place. The safeguards put in place are shared with the member of staff.

In these conditions, the staff members' appointment is not confirmed until satisfactory receipt of the DBS.

No staff member will be left unsupervised pending receipt of a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure. A separate Barred List check will be requested prior to the employment commencing where a DBS check has not been received prior to the start date.

DBS checks will still be requested for applicants with recent periods of overseas residence and those with little or no previous UK residence.

Where an applicant has an up-to-date portable DBS certificate, a check of the certificate will be made online with the applicants' explicit permission. In addition, a separate Barred List Check will be undertaken.

There are limited circumstances where the school will accept a check from another educational institution which are as follows:

Where the member of staff ("M") has worked in:

- (a) A school or a maintained school in England in a position which brought M regularly into contact with children or young persons;
- (b) A maintained school in England in a position to which M was appointed on or after May 2006 and which did not bring M regularly into contact with children or young persons; or
- (c) An institution within the further education sector in England or in a 16 to 19 academy in a position which involved the provision of education or which brought M regularly into contact with children or young persons, during a period which ended not more than three months before M's appointment.

In these circumstances the school may apply for a disclosure but it is not required to do so. A new, separate Barred List check will be obtained.

Medical Fitness

The school is required to verify the medical fitness of any staff member appointed to a post at the school, after an offer of employment has been made but before the appointment can be confirmed.

All applicants are requested to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire and where appropriate a doctor's medical report may be required. This information will be reviewed against details of any physical or mental requirements of the role.

The school is aware of its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No job offer will be withdrawn without first consulting with the applicant, obtaining medical evidence and considering reasonable adjustments.

Overseas checks

Applicants who have lived/travelled abroad for more than 3 months in the previous 5 years

will need to obtain a criminal record check from the relevant country. The applicant will not be permitted to commence work until the overseas information has been received and is considered satisfactory by the school.

Other checks may be undertaken, and will be reasonable and proportionate depending on the circumstances. Checks may include (but are not limited to):

- proof of an applicant's past conduct as a teacher as issued by the professional regulating authority in the country that they have lived in;
- verification of professional qualifications which the school deems a requirement for the post, or which the applicant otherwise cites in support of their application;
- Additional references from overseas referees;
- Completion of a self-declaration form to confirm that they do not have a criminal record from any overseas country in line with the law in England and Wales, and that they are not the subject of any sanction, restriction or prohibition issued by a regulating body in the teaching profession of any other country.

Induction Programme

All new staff will be given an induction programme which will clearly identify the school policies and procedures, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and Part One of KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education), and make clear the expectations which will govern how staff carry out their roles and responsibilities.

All new staff will also be required to undertake training on the Prevent Duty.

Single Central Register

In addition to the various staff records kept in school and on individual personnel files, a single centralised record of recruitment and vetting checks is kept in accordance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 requirements.

This is kept up-to-date and retained by the Human Resources Department.

The Single Central Register will contain details of the following:

- All staff who are employed to work at the school (either under a contract of employment, contract for services or otherwise than under a contract);
- all employees who are employed as supply staff to the school through an agency;
- all others who have been chosen by the school to work in regular contact with children. This will cover volunteers and Governors.

A designated Governor will be responsible for auditing the Single Central Register and reporting his/her findings to the full Governing Body.

Trainees required to undertake work in other institutions

Where the school has employed a Trainee and they are required to work in other institutions as part of their qualification, the school may require further or enhanced checks to be completed in addition to the above in order to comply with the requirements of the training body.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The school is legally required to undertake the above pre-employment checks. All checks must be received prior to the start date with the exception of the DBS (which must have been requested prior to the start date), for which a risk assessment can be put in place and reviewed every 2 weeks at the discretion of the Headmaster.

Therefore, if an applicant is successful in their application, the school will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. Medical information may be used to help the school to discharge its obligations as an employer e.g., so that the school may consider reasonable adjustments if an employee suffers from a disability or to assist with any other workplace issue.

Successful applicants should refer to the school's Privacy Notice and the Staff Privacy Notice for further details of the schools' processing activities.

This documentation will be retained by the school for the duration of the successful applicant's employment with the school and for a period of 6 years after employment has ended, in accordance with the school's Data Retention Policy. All information retained on employees is kept centrally in the Human Resources Department in a locked and secure cabinet during their period of employment and is archived securely following a member of staff's departure from the school.

The same policy applies to any suitability information obtained about volunteers involved with school activities. Personal information relating to volunteers is stored securely in the Human Resources Department.

Solihull School will retain all interview notes on all unsuccessful applicants for a period of 6-12 months, after which time the notes will be confidentially destroyed (i.e. shredded), in accordance with the school's Data Retention Policy.

Ongoing Employment

Solihull School recognises that safer recruitment and selection is not just about the start of employment, but should be part of a larger policy framework for all staff. The school will therefore provide ongoing training and support for all staff, as identified through the annual Review/appraisal procedure, safeguarding requirements and current legislation i.e., KCSIE and Prevent Duty.

Leaving Employment at Solihull School

Despite the best efforts to recruit safely there will be occasions when allegations of serious misconduct or abuse against children and young people are raised. This policy is primarily concerned with the promotion of safer recruitment and details the pre-employment checks that will be undertaken prior to employment being confirmed.

The school also has a legal duty to make a referral to the DBS in circumstances where an individual has been removed by the school from working in regulated activity (whether paid or unpaid), or has resigned prior to being removed, because they have harmed, or pose a risk of harm to, a child.

If the individual referred to the DBS is a teacher, the school may also decide to make a referral to the Teaching Regulations Agency (TRA).

Contractors and agency staff

Contractors engaged by the school must complete the same checks for their employees that the school is required to complete for its staff. The school requires written confirmation that these checks have been completed before employees of the contractor can commence work at the school.

Agencies who supply staff to the school must also complete the pre-employment checks which the school would otherwise complete for its staff. Again, the school requires written confirmation that these checks have been completed before an individual can commence work at the school.

The school will independently verify the identity of staff supplied by contractors or agencies and will require the provision of the original DBS certificate before contractors or agency staff can commence work at the school.

Contractor and agency staff will be recorded on the Single Central Register.

Volunteers

The school will request an enhanced DBS disclosure and Children's Barred List information on all volunteers undertaking regulated activity with pupils at or on behalf of the school.

Under no circumstances will the school permit an unchecked volunteer to have unsupervised contact with pupils.

It is the school's policy that a new DBS certificate is required for volunteers who will engage in regulated activity but who have not been involved in any activities with the school for three consecutive months or more.

Those volunteers who are likely to be involved in activities with the school on a regular basis may be required to sign up to the DBS update service as this permits the school to obtain up to date criminal records information without delay prior to each new activity in which a volunteer participates.

In addition, the school will seek to obtain such further suitability information about a volunteer as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. This may include (but is not limited to the following):

- formal or informal information provided by staff, parents and other volunteers;
- character references from the volunteer's place of work or any other relevant source; and
- an informal safer recruitment interview.