



Policy: Safer Recruitment

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Person responsible for policy: Stephen Dean, Chief Executive Officer

Authorised by: Board of Trustees

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This Policy applies to all schools within the Primary QuEST Multi-Academy Trust. Primary QuEST is a Church of England Trust which seeks to ensure all pupils flourish, together in a supportive and caring environment.

Flourishing together through LIFE

The safe recruitment of staff in trusts is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in education. Primary QuEST MAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers 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.

This trust recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities. The trust is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the trust is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, effective and promotes equality of opportunity. The trust will uphold its obligations under law and national collective agreements to not discriminate against applicants for employment on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or creed.

This document provides a good practice framework to comply with the principles set down in the Equal Opportunity Policy.

All posts within trust 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, including those regarded as spent and have an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

The trust is committed to ensuring people who have been convicted 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.

The trust will:

- Follow the 12-step guide to safer recruitment provided by GSCP
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- ensure that appropriate staff who undertake recruitment have received safer recruitment training and successfully completed the NCSL safer recruitment training assessment
- ensure every appointment panel to include one member who has received safer recruitment training
- implement robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that all 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 intended role.
- keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with DCSF requirements
- ensure that the terms of any contract with a supply agency require them to adopt and implement the measures described in this procedure. The trust will monitor the compliance with these measures.
- require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the trust to notify the trust, in writing of the offence and the penalty.

The following pre-employment checks will be undertaken:

- Receipt of at least two satisfactory references, one of which will be from the former or most recent employer
- Verification of the candidate's identity in line with the requirements of The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006
- A list 99 check
- A satisfactory DBS clearance
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of qualifications
- Verification of professional registration as required by law for teachers
- Verification of successful completion of induction period (for those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)
- A completed Disqualification Declaration form

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the CEO / headteacher to:

- Ensure the trust has effective policies and procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff and volunteers in accordance with DCSF guidance and legal requirements
- Monitor the trust's compliance with them

It is the responsibility of the CEO / headteacher and SLT involved in recruitment to:

- Ensure that the trust operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the trust
- To monitor contractors' and agencies' compliance with this document
- Promote welfare of children and young people at every stage of the procedure

It is the responsibility of all potential and existing workers, including volunteers, to comply with this document.

It is the responsibility of all contractors and agencies to comply with safer recruitment pre-employment checks.

In accordance with the Trust Staffing Regulations, the governing body has delegated responsibility to

the Head Teacher to lead in all appointments outside of the leadership group. Local advisors or trustees may be involved in staff appointments, but the final decision will rest with the Head Teacher.

Advertising

To ensure equality of opportunity, the trust will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible, normally this will entail an external advertisement.

However, where there is a reasonable expectation that there are sufficiently qualified internal candidates or where staff are at risk of redundancy, an internal advertisement may be considered appropriate. Volunteers in trust are also welcome to apply to internally advertised posts.

Absences due to short and long term sickness are usually covered using staff from Teacher supply agencies in the first instance until it is known how long the member of staff is likely to be absent. Temporary positions will then be advertised for long term absence positions. Social media checks may take place and therefore this information needs to be included on the advertisement.

Applications

The form – The trust uses a standard application form found on the GCC website. CVs will not be accepted.

The trust requires candidates to account for any gaps or discrepancies in employment history on this application form. Where an applicant is shortlisted, these gaps will be discussed at an interview.

Applicants should be 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, and possible referral to the police and other professional regulatory bodies (e.g. General Teaching Council for England).

References

References for shortlisted candidates will be sent for immediately after shortlisting.

References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable.

The trust will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend. Only references from a trusted authoritative source will be acceptable. Reference requests will specifically ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the concerns and the reasons why the referee believes that the person might be unsuitable.

Referees will also be asked to confirm details of:

- The applicant's current post, salary and attendance record
- Performance history and conduct
- Any disciplinary procedures in which the sanction is current
- Any disciplinary procedures involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children, including any in which the sanction has expired and the outcome of those details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised that relate to the safety and welfare of children

or behaviour towards children and the outcome of these concerns.

References will be compared to the application form to ensure that the information provided is consistent. Any discrepancies will be taken up with the applicant at interview.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case. Cases in which an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago, or an allegation was determined to be unfounded or did not require formal disciplinary sanctions, and where no further issues have been raised, are not likely to cause concern. More serious or recent concerns or issues are more likely to cause concern. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

Self-declaration of convictions by job applicants

The trust's policy is to require shortlisted applicants for all posts (including volunteers) to declare all criminal convictions whether "spent" or "unspent" and include any cautions and pending prosecution.

Such declarations will be made on an appropriate form and should be submitted in a sealed envelope, marked strictly private and confidential to the chair of the selection panel / Head Teacher, prior to the interview. The chair of the panel / Head Teacher will discuss relevant, positive declarations confidentially with the applicant at interview.

The disclosure of convictions, cautions or pending cases will not necessarily prevent employment but will be considered in the same way as positive DBS disclosures.

Interviews

The selection process will always include the following:

- Face to face interview / professional interview,
- Proof of Identity and Right to Work in the UK & Verification of Qualifications and/or Professional Status.
- Shortlisted applicants for all posts will be required to provide proof of identity by producing documents on the day of interview in line with those set out in The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. Similar information is also required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check on the preferred candidate.
- Short-listed candidates will also be required to provide proof of their qualifications and professional status by producing documentation on the day of interview. The trust will verify that candidates have actually obtained any qualifications legally required or deemed essential for the job and claimed in their application by asking to see the relevant certificate, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body / institution. If the original documents are not available, the trust will require sight of a properly certified copy. Where candidates have obtained qualifications abroad, a certified comparability check by NARIC will also be required.
- Proof of identity and other documentation will be verified by the chair of the panel / Head Teacher

Commencement of Employment prior to DBS check being received

In unusual circumstances it is permitted to commence employment prior to receiving a cleared DBS check. However, a Barring List check and risk assessment must be completed.

Employment Offer

It may be possible to negotiate a provisional start date with the preferred candidate, however, with the exception of DBS disclosures, the checks detailed above must all be completed BEFORE a person's appointment is confirmed. In the case of DBS disclosures, the certificate must be obtained before or as soon as practicable after appointment.

Once all pre-employment checks have been satisfactorily completed / received, an offer of employment will be made and the contract of employment issued. The contract will be issued as soon as possible but in all circumstances within 8 weeks of employment commencing.

Record Retention / Data Protection

The trust will retain all interview notes on all applicants for a 6 month period, after which time the notes will be destroyed (i.e. shredded). The 6 month retention period will allow the trust to deal with any data access requests, recruitment complaints or respond to any complaints made to the Employment tribunal.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, 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 panel / Head Teacher within 6 months of the interview date.

Personal file records

For the successful candidate, the trust will retain the following information which will make up part of their personal file:

- Application form
- References
- Disclosure of convictions form
- Proof of identification
- Proof of academic qualifications
- Proof of registration with General Teaching Council (for teaching staff) certificate of Good Conduct (where applicable)
- Evidence of medical clearance from Occupational Health Evidence of the DBS clearance
- Single Central Record of Recruitment Vetting Checks

In line with DCSF requirements, the trust will keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks. The central list will record all staff who are employed at the trust, including casual staff, supply agency staff whether employed directly or through an agency, volunteers, local advisors and trustees who also work as volunteers, and those who provide additional teaching or instruction for pupils but who are not staff members, e.g. specialist sports coach or artist.

The central record will indicate whether or not the following have been completed:

- Identity checks
- Qualification checks for any qualifications legally required for the job
- Additionally, for those applying for teaching posts, registration check with the GTC where appropriate
- Checks of right to work in the United Kingdom
- DBS Enhanced Disclosure
- Baring List check
- Further overseas records
- Where appropriate medical check date
- It shall also indicate who undertook the check and the date on which the

check was completed, or the relevant certificate obtained.

Supply staff

In order to record supply staff provided through an agency on the record, the trust will require written confirmation from the supply agency that it has satisfactorily completed the checks described above. The trust does not need to carry out checks itself except where there is information contained within the disclosure. However, identity checks must be carried out by the trust to check the person arriving is the person the agency intends to refer to them.

Probation periods

The trust may include a probation period for newly appointed teachers who are new to the employment of the trust. In this case staff will be subject to the trust's probationary period and a review with a senior leader will take place at the end of the probation period.

Trust staff will be given a copy of the DCSF guidance on Safe Working Practice and asked to sign a declaration that they have read and understood the document and will follow the guidelines required to maintain professional boundaries at all times. The trust adopts a culture of vigilance where all concerns are listened to and taken seriously. The trust will follow DCSF and Safeguarding Children Board allegations procedures and refer any allegation for initial consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Induction

All newly appointed staff will, either prior to or at the point of taking up the post, undergo a programme of induction appropriate for their post. The induction will specifically address issues concerning the safeguarding of children and young people as well as matters directly related to the operation of the post.

Biblical underpinning for Church of England schools

In Romans Paul does a lot of reflecting about law and grace. Just before he speaks of the grace of Christ, he observes "What the Law does is to make a man or woman know that they have sinned". Safer recruitment helps us see how best to use the law to reveal sinfulness and so protect our schools from employing abusive predators.

This policy is anchored in our Trust vision and the Christian values we share.

Safeguarding Children: safer-recruitment flowchart

