

The Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust



Safer Recruitment Policy

'Christ at our centre, inspiring pursuit of excellence'

June 2023

Introduction

1. The safe recruitment of staff in schools is the first step to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in education. The Academy Trust 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 cooperation and the recruitment and retention of competent, motivated employees who are suited to, and fulfilled in the roles they undertake.
2. Each school recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve a diverse workforce which includes people from different backgrounds with different skills and abilities. Our schools are committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of all who work within the school is conducted in a manner that is systematic, efficient, and effective and promotes equality of opportunity. All schools will uphold their 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.
3. This document provides a good practice framework to support the successful recruitment of high calibre, appropriately qualified and fully vetted staff to posts within the school.
4. All posts within our schools are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore all applicants will be required to complete an Enhanced Criminal Records Disclosure, declaring any spent and unspent convictions, where relevant.
5. 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.

Responsibilities

1. Local Governing Bodies must ensure that they and their advisers have read the Bishops' Memorandum on the Appointment of Staff in Catholic Schools ('the Memorandum') in order to ensure that the requirements of the Memorandum are met. The Memorandum can be viewed by following the link below: <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/employment-documents/bishops-memorandum>
2. Local Governing Bodies must seek advice from the Diocese as soon as is practicable after the identification of the requirement to recruit for a Senior Leadership post and, in any case, before any recruitment procedure or process begins. Local Governing Bodies must ensure that they follow any recruitment guidance issued by their Diocese.
3. Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) must also review the recruitment section of the Diocesan Protocols in order to ensure that the relevant requirements are complied with. LGBs are responsible for ensuring that their advisers comply with the documents and advice referred to in this guidance.
4. LGBs must familiarise themselves with Part Three of the statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment which can be accessed by following the link below. [.Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\).](http://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/keeping-children-safe-in-education)

Each School within the Trust will:

1. Ensure that at least one person on the panel for all posts have received Safer Recruitment Training the substance of which should, as a minimum, cover the requirements of Part Three.
2. At least one person on every interview panel should have completed safer recruitment training which should be regularly refreshed (every three years is the suggested timescale for this).
3. 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 intended role
4. Keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with safer recruitment requirements
5. Ensure that the terms of contract with relevant agencies requires them to adopt and implement measures described in this procedure. The school will monitor the compliance with these measures
6. Require staff who are convicted or cautioned for any offence during their employment with the school to notify the school, in writing of the offence and the penalty.

Recruitment and Selection Process

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training.

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Advertising

1. To ensure equality of opportunity, each school 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.
2. Advertisements for posts will include the following statements:

'As part of our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, all postholders are subject to a satisfactory enhanced Criminal Records Bureau disclosure.'

'The school intends to carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates as part of its due diligence. Any concerns which arise maybe discussed at, or prior to the interview stage.'

'The successful candidate will be required to undertake and have a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.'

When advertising roles, we will make clear:

The safeguarding requirements and responsibilities of the role, such as the extent to which the role will involve contact with children

Whether or not the role is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020. If the role is exempt, certain spent convictions and cautions are 'protected', so they do not need to be disclosed, and if they are disclosed, we cannot take them into account'

Applications

1. The school uses the Catholic Education Service application forms. CVs will not be accepted. They include a statement saying
It is an offence to knowingly apply for, offer to do, accept, or do any work in a regulated position if you have been disqualified from working with children. Any offer of employment will be subject to checks being carried out in order to ensure that you are not subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order.
2. All schools require 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 interview.
3. 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 (eg: General Teaching Council for England).

Shortlisting

1. Shortlisting of candidates will be against the job description person specification for the post.
2. Our shortlisting process will involve at least 2 people and will:
 - Consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons given for them
 - Explore all potential concerns
3. Once the school has shortlisted candidates, they will ensure they have included in application:

- › a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. The information we ask for includes:
 - If they have a criminal history
 - whether they are included on the barred list
 - whether they are prohibited from teaching
 - information about any criminal offences committed in any country in line with the law as applicable in England and Wales
 - any relevant overseas information
- 4. The school will also carry out an online search on shortlisted candidates to help identify any incidents or issues that are publicly available online, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- 5. CES invite to interview provides a template to invite shortlisted candidates. The wording includes reminder for candidates invited to interview to bring the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 – Disclosure Form with them in a sealed envelope when they attend for interview. **Please note that these forms should not be viewed until an offer of employment is about to be made.**

Gathering references and checking employment history

1. When gathering references all schools within the Trust will:
 - Liaise directly and not rely on open references.
 - Ensure any references are from the candidate's current employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, they will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
 - Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
 - Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
 - Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
 - Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed.
2. References for shortlisted candidates will be sent for immediately after shortlisting. At least, one reference will be sought prior to interview wherever possible.
3. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied - open references or testimonials are not acceptable. Where necessary, references may be contacted by telephone or email in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges. The Trust will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend.
4. Reference requests will specifically ask about:
 - The referee's relationship with the candidate
 - Details of the applicant's current post and attendance record

- performance history and conduct
 - the candidates suitability for this post
 - 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.
5. The Trust's Reference Request Form (attached) will be used as template in all cases to ensure that the details outlined above are included.
 6. 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 which 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.
 7. References are the "property" of the shortlisting panel and strict confidentiality will be observed. Employer testimonials or 'bearer references' i.e., those provided by the candidate and/or marked 'to whom it may concern' will not be accepted. References must be in writing and be specific to the job for which the candidate has applied. The shortlisting panel will not accept references from relatives or people writing solely in the capacity as a friend of the candidate. References will be verified, and any discrepancies will be discussed with the candidate at interview. Electronic references will be checked to ensure they originate from a legitimate source.

Online Searches

The 2022 update of Keeping Children Safe in Education includes a new step in the shortlisting process as follows:

*"as part of the shortlisting process schools and colleges **should consider** carrying out an online search as part of their due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school or college might want to explore with the applicant at interview".*

1. Online searches will be carried out on all candidates invited to interview for internal and external candidates.
2. We will ensure equivalent checks are complied with by providers of agency staff, governors and volunteers.
3. We will remember that the purpose of these searches is to uncover information which may indicate that the individual is unsuitable to work with children and/or where, if the information were discovered by students or parents it could lead to significant reputational damage for the School.

Interview and selection

1. When interviewing candidates, schools will:
 - Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this

- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
 - Record all information considered and decisions made
2. Before the interviews the selection panel will agree on the interview format [including any other assessment methods]. The questions asked will be aimed at obtaining evidence of how each candidate meets the requirement of the job description and the person specification and each candidate will be assessed against all of the criteria for the post. The same areas of questioning will be covered for each applicant and no questions which would discriminate directly or indirectly on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 will be asked.
 3. The selection process for every post, will include exploration of the candidate's understanding of child safeguarding issues. Questions will include:
 - Finding out what attracted the candidate to the post being applied for and their motivation for working with children
 - Exploring their skills and asking for examples of experience of working with children which are relevant to the role
 - Probing any gaps in employment or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, asking for the reasons for this

The interview will also explore potential areas of concern to determine the applicant's suitability to work with children. Areas that may be concerning and lead to further probing 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
 - Indicators of negative safeguarding behaviours
4. The selection process will always include the following:
 - Face to face professional interview including a question related to safeguarding children (in line with NCSL Safer Recruitment Training)
 - Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations will be considered in the circumstances of the individual case.
 - The interview will also include a discussion of any convictions, cautions or pending prosecutions, other than those protected, that the candidate has declared and are relevant to the prospective employment.
 5. The recruitment documentation will be retained for six months from the date of interview. Applicants have the right to request access to notes written about them during the recruitment process. After six months all information about unsuccessful candidates will be securely destroyed.

Pre-appointment vetting checks

Schools across the Trust are required to record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals'

personnel files. Schools will follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff

1. All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, schools across the Trust will:
 - Verify their identity
 - Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
 - Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
 - Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
 - Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
 - Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
 - Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
 - Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
 - For all staff, including teaching positions: [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#)
 - For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach
 - Check that candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state
 - Academy primary Schools with pupils aged under 8 add: will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or

- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more
- Schools will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:
 - The school believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or
 - The school believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#);or
 - The school believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
 - The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

All schools within the Trust will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made

Contractors

1. All schools within the Trust will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:
 - An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
 - An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children
2. Schools will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.
3. Schools will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.
4. Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.
5. Schools will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

6. Trust primary schools with pupils aged under 8
For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

1. Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, each school will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.
2. Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.
3. Trust primary schools with pupils aged under 8
In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

1. All schools across the Trust will:
 - Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
 - Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
 - Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
 - Academy primary Schools with pupils aged under 8 Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Governing Body Members

1. All members of the local governing body will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.
2. They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

Trust Board

1. All Directors of the Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust will have an enhanced DBS check.
2. All Directors and staff working across more than one school will have all relevant information shared to be recorded on the relevant single central record maintained at individual level in each school that is part of the Trust.

Policy Ratified: 6th July 2023

Signed: _____



James Coyle
(Chair of the Blessed Holy Family Trust Board.)

Date of next Review: