

Recruitment & Selection Policy

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This policy should be read in conjunction with Section 4a (Safer Recruitment) and Section 23a-e (Safeguarding), Volume 1, Guidance for Schools on iPost

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Staff are the most important and valuable resource and play a major role in the delivery of quality teaching and learning in our schools. The purpose of this policy (and those associated with it) is to support safe and fair recruitment practices that are rigorously enforced by schools and academies allowing you to adopt a coherent and consistent approach to recruiting and retaining staff of the highest caliber.
- 1.2 The Governing Body has overall responsibility for all staff appointments in its school. However, it may delegate responsibility for any or all appointments, with the exception of the posts of Principal and Vice Principal, to the Principal, an individual Governor or a group of Governors. Each Governing Body is required to specify these arrangements in the School's Standing Orders which should be reviewed annually (see Sections 2 & 2a, Volume 1, Guidance for Schools, on iPost for further information regarding school governance) - ([Section 2](#) / [Section 2a](#)).
- 1.3 Where the Principal is exercising delegated responsibility, this cannot be delegated to another person by the Principal.

2. Statutory Framework

Keeping Children Safe in Education is statutory guidance issued by the Department of Education in July 2015. Schools and colleges (including Academies) must have regard to this guidance when carrying out their duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Further information can be found by clicking on the following link: [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

It is strongly recommended and implied in Keeping Children Safe in Education that at least 1 person on any appointment has undertaken safer recruitment training.

3. Equalities

- 3.1 It is important throughout every stage of the recruitment process to ensure that no applicant receives less favorable treatment than another as a result of any protected characteristic as defined within the Equalities Act 2010. All recruitment procedures and practices should reflect these values.
- 3.2 Discrimination claims may arise at any point during the recruitment and selection process from the wording of an advert to the formal interview process so it is crucial that Principals and governors are trained and are confident that no discrimination, direct or indirect, takes place at any stage of the process.

This recruitment & selection policy has been broken down into the key stages of the process for ease of reference. A checklist can be found at Section 4b which Academies may find useful when planning a recruitment exercise.

4. **Identifying a Vacancy**

- 4.1 A staff vacancy can occur for a number of reasons e.g. staff resignation, school re-organisation, identification of a specific project. The most common occurrence will be staff resignation.
- 4.2 On receipt of a staff resignation, the Principal/ Governing Body should consider whether there is a need to replace the post in exactly the same way as the previous appointment or whether the creation of the vacant post provides an opportunity to review the school staffing structure and how tasks and responsibilities are allocated.
- 4.3 Consideration should be given to the following:
- Does the school need to replace the post?
 - Can the school afford to replace the post and if so what are the required contracted hours to meet the operational needs of the school?
 - What type of contract does the school wish to offer – permanent, Fixed Term or Flexible? (see Section 6, Volume 1, Guidance for Schools, iPost for further information regarding contracts - [Section 6](#))
 - Has the nature of the role changed since the previous post holder was appointed?
 - Does the Job Description need updating in line with the required changes of the post?
- 4.4 If schools are appointing to provide tuition/coaching as part of enrichment activities, consideration needs to be given to the employment status of the individual (see Section 6, Volume 1, Guidance for Schools, iPost for further information regarding contracts - [Section 6](#))

5. **Advertising a Vacancy**

5.1 **Principal/ Vice Principal Vacancies**

Advice regarding the recruitment and selection process for Principal/ Vice Principal appointments can be obtained via colleagues within the Educational Improvement Service, Support Services For Education and can be contacted on 01823 355812.

- 5.1.1 It is a legal requirement that all schools must have a Principal, however, there is no legal requirement for schools to either have a Vice Principal or to be limited to just one.
- 5.1.2 When advertising, the Governing Body should decide the best way of reaching its target audience, taking into consideration the type of media to be

used and the level of exposure the advertisement will receive. At the very least it should be advertised in a printed publication circulating throughout England & Wales (The Times Educational Supplement (TES), is most widely used).

5.1.3 The Governing Body may decide to appoint to the vacant post on an “Acting” basis while it considers the longer term leadership requirements of the school. In these circumstances there is no legal requirement to advertise externally, however, any internal appointment should only be made following a fair and transparent selection process where all staff are given equal opportunity to apply (provided they meet the essential criteria for the post). Governors should consider assessing potential candidate suitability alongside the National Standards of Excellence for Principal (2015). [PrincipalStandards 2015](#)

5.1.4 Any acting arrangement should be kept under regular review by the Governing Body and they should be able to demonstrate that all reasonable measures are being taken to appoint to the post on a permanent basis as quickly as is possible.

5.2 **Teaching and Support Staff Vacancies**

5.2.1 There is no legal requirement to advertise a teaching or support staff vacancy externally. Given the associated costs with external advertising, the Principal / Governing Body should consider succession planning and whether there is the potential to appoint to the vacant post from within the existing staffing structure.

5.2.2 In any event, Principals are advised to ensure all vacancies are advertised on the staff noticeboard as a minimum, to enable all staff equality of opportunity to apply and reduce or remove the potential for a claim of unfair treatment or discrimination.

5.3 **Drafting the Advert**

5.3.1 Irrespective of the type of post being advertised, it is important the content of the advert attracts the required caliber of applicant – it is the quality of the content rather than the quantity that is important.

5.3.2 The advert should set out clearly the specific details of the vacancy and as a minimum should cover the:

- name of school;
- job title;
- salary of the post (if the post is term time only and/or part-time the pro-rated salary should be published), this should be in-line with decisions made in the school pay policy;
- number of contracted hours;

- type of contract being offered (If fixed term the reason for this should be specified – e.g. maternity cover, sickness absence);
- preferred start date;
- brief description of work and skills/qualifications required;
- closing date and how to apply;
- contact name & number for the applicant to contact should they want to find out more information.

6. **The Application Pack**

- 6.1 The application pack serves as the “shop window” to the school and will be the basis on which potential applicants form first impressions of the school as a prospective employer. In addition to the content of the advert, careful consideration should be given to the content of the application pack to ensure it promotes the school positively and attracts the highest calibre applicants.
- 6.2 A welcome letter should be included in the application pack providing relevant information about the school, aimed at attracting the applicant and further encouraging them to continue with their application.
- 6.3 A copy of the Job Description should be included within the application pack as this provides the applicant with an accurate illustration of the key tasks, duties and responsibilities of the post. It is important that Job Descriptions are kept up to date and reviewed regularly to ensure any changes in the roles are identified and captured.
- 6.4 The statutory duties for teachers, including Principals and Vice Principals, are set out in the School Teachers Pay & Conditions document along with the Teacher Professional Standards as published by the Department for Education. These documents should be referred to when creating or reviewing an existing job description for teaching posts.
- 6.5 Academies may determine pay and grading arrangements for their support staff through local agreement with the recognised Trade Unions, although it should be remembered that collective agreements and terms and conditions for existing staff transferred when the Academy formed.
- 6.7 In order to provide Governing Bodies with an objective but flexible means of determining the grades/salaries for their establishments, a number of generic job descriptions have been assessed and graded under the Local Authority’s Job Evaluation Scheme. From these, a matrix of job roles and respective salary grades, with key responsibilities summarised, has been produced to help governing bodies identify the appropriate grade and salary ranges for new posts. Academies may wish to access these - a copy of the Job Evaluation matrices can be found at section 4b on iPost.
- 6.8 The person specification defines the essential and desirable attributes an individual will need to possess to be able to fulfil the role. These attributes

include qualifications, skills, experience and knowledge and it is this criterion that will be used in the short-listing process (see section 7.2). A template person specification can be found at section 4b.

- 6.9 The person specification should be derived from the job description, selecting the key tasks and duties of the role, and translating these into the abilities and skills required to do the role.
- 6.10 The application form should be included in all packs and a copy of the forms for teaching and non-teaching posts can be found at section 4b.

7. **Selection**

7.1 **Safer Recruitment Training**

It is strongly recommended and implied in Keeping Children Safe in Education that at least one person on any appointment has undertaken safer recruitment training. For further information on training please contact Somerset Local Safeguarding Children's Board [Somerset Local Safeguarding Children's Board](#)

7.2. **Shortlisting**

The Data Protection Act provides for applicants to have a right to see the information used in the short-listing process. Therefore, it is advised that the short-listing panel use the job description and person specification to inform the short-listing process by listing the 'essential' criteria and 'desirable' criteria for all the requirements of the job on a short-listing grid. It is advised that the short-listing panel is made up of at least 2 people.

To score applicants the panel is advised to use a points or rating system to score the candidates against the criteria on the short-listing grid. For example: 2=exceeds criteria, 1=meets criteria, 0=fails to meet criteria. Once scoring is complete any applicants that score a '0' on one or more of the 'essential' criteria would not be considered further. Remaining candidates can be ranked in priority order, highest score first. If there are still a large number of candidates, then the shortlisting panel may want to consider scoring them against the 'desirable' criteria. A template short-listing document can be found at section 4b.

On completion of the short-listing process a decision should be made on the list of candidates to invite for interview. If there is only 1 job to fill then it is advised that the number of candidates invited is limited to no more than 6. It may be that schools wish to introduce an initial phone interview to further short-list candidates prior to inviting to interview.

7.3 Gaps in Employment History unaccounted for

At this stage of the recruitment process the application form should be scrutinised to check for any gaps in employment history and to ensure that the referees are the most recent employers. Where there are periods of time unaccounted for; this should be explored further at the interview stage.

7.4 Applicants who declare they have a disability

Legislation requires reasonable adjustments or adaptations to be considered for those applicants who declare they have a disability. Therefore, it is advised that if an applicant declares they have a disability on their application form and meet the essential criteria of the person specification, they are shortlisted and invited to interview.

7.5 Letter Template requesting reference at shortlisting stage

Keeping Children Safe in Education states that references should be sought on all shortlisted candidates, including internal, before interview. A reference template can be found at section 4b.

7.6 Asking Applicants questions in relation to any sickness absence or their health either before or during the interview

The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal for employers to ask applicants any questions about their health or disability before a job offer is made. The safeguard for the school is that any offer of employment should make it clear that it is conditional and subject to satisfactory pre-employment clearance which includes medical clearance. In the event the school is advised that the potential employee has a medical condition for which the recommended adjustments are not reasonable, then they can withdraw their offer, however, schools are strongly advised to contact their HR Adviser prior to any decision being made. Failure to follow this advice could result in the potential for the applicant or candidate to make a discrimination claim against the school.

7.7 Interviewing**Prior to Interview****Invite to Interview Letter**

Send invite to interview letters to all short-listed candidates. A template invite letter can be found at section 4b. The school can ask in the letter if the candidate requires any reasonable adjustments to be made so that they are able to attend and participate fully in the interview.

Interview Questions

In order to apply a consistent approach, it is advised the panel agree, in advance of the interview, a set of questions which they will ask all candidates which are based on the requirements of the post. The questions used should be competency based so they allow the candidate to provide examples of how they meet the requirements for the post. The panel may ask supplementary questions to enable them to explore further the candidate's application and references (if available).

The interview panel should be clear that it is their responsibility to ensure each applicant has the equal opportunity to highlight their suitability for the role, however, this does not mean they need to stick rigidly to a set group of questions and exploring and probing an individual's competencies is one of the best ways to do this.

Selection Tests

In addition to a panel interview, depending on the type of role being recruited, selection tests can be used as part of the selection process e.g. professionally designed selection tests can provide an objective and relatively accurate way of assessing key skills which are difficult to measure in an interview. There are a variety of different techniques available to enable assessment of a wide range of skills and aptitudes at all levels.

Examples include;

- Group Selection Exercises
- Involvement of Pupils
- Oral Presentation Skills
- In-Tray Exercises
- Written Exercises
- Verbal reasoning*
- Checking skills
- Numerical computation
- Clarification
- Personality and behaviour assessment*.

* It is advised that some of these techniques should only be used when it is essential to determine that a candidate has specific abilities, aptitudes or behaviour and should only be used and interpreted by qualified and experienced assessors.

Interview Panel

It is advised interview panels comprise of a minimum of two panel members – this allows one person to observe and assess the candidate, and make notes, while the candidate responds to the question posed by the other panel member/s. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview.

For some posts it can also be useful for other members of staff and governors to meet the candidates and pupil involvement is recommended. This will ensure that the candidates are able to obtain a full view of the working environment and philosophy of the school while at the same time enables an assessment to be made of how candidates interact with various stakeholders. Only people involved in the selection process should be included in the final decision making process.

The requirement for employees in schools to speak fluent English

As part of the amendments to the Immigration Act 2016, there will be a new statutory duty for all public authorities to ensure that people who work in customer-facing roles speak fluent English (English or Welsh in Wales). Members of the public will have the right to make a complaint if they feel a public sector worker has an insufficient proficiency in spoken English [code of practice english language requirement public sector workers.pdf](#)

This will apply to all staff including permanent and fixed term employees, apprentices, self-employed contractors and agency temps. It does not extend to workers employed by private or third sector provider of a public service at the moment, but it could be extended in the future. It applies to an employee who, as a regular and intrinsic part of their role, are required to speak to members of the public in English either face-to-face or by telephone, are considered as working in a customer-facing role. Members of the public include adults, children and young people.

Employees must have a command of spoken English which is sufficient to enable the effective performance of their role. The standard of fluency must be proportionate to the role in question.

Job descriptions and job advertisements

It is advised that the Headteacher/Manager makes it clear in any job adverts and job descriptions that the necessary standard of spoken English is required for every role identified as customer-facing under this duty. They could add the following wording to the advert: *"This post is covered by Part 7 of the Immigration Act (2016) and therefore the ability to speak fluent spoken English is an essential requirement for the role"*.

English Fluency Assessment

Fluency relates to language proficiency and ability to speak with confidence and accuracy, using accurate sentence structures and vocabulary. In the context of a customer-facing role an employee should be able to choose the right kind of vocabulary for the situation at hand without a great deal of hesitation. They can listen to their customer and understand their needs. They can tailor their approach to each conversation appropriate to their customer responding clearly with fine shades of meaning, even in complex situations

Where fluency is identified as an essential requirement for the role, then the Headteacher/Manager is advised to ensure there is an assessment process for this, examples of which could be:

- Proof of possessing a relevant Regulated Qualification Framework at level 2 or above taught in English by a recognised institution abroad or attained as part of an education in the UK.
- Proof of passing an English spoken language competency test.

However, as qualifications or tests are not proof of spoken language ability then it is recommended that the ability to speak fluent English is always assessed at interview. At interview they should be able to competently answer interview questions in English

Note taking

It is advised that notes are taken in relation to the candidates' responses/ answers to questions and marked afterwards using the interview assessment form and Interview Summary Scoring form. An interview assessment form and interview summary scoring document can be found at section 4b.

Identity Checks

Proof of identity of a candidate and their eligibility to work in the UK **must** be checked thoroughly to ensure they are who they claim to be at interview. The invite letter should ask them to bring the relevant documentation to interview. If for any reason this is not possible, the school should ensure that the successful candidate provides this before their appointment and start date is confirmed.

The following checks should be carried out:

- The documents are genuine, original and unchanged and belong to the person who has given them to you.
- The dates for the worker's right to work in the UK haven't expired.
- Photos are the same across all documents and look like the applicant.
- Dates of birth are the same across all documents.
- The person has permission to do the type of work you're offering (including any limit on the number of hours they can work).
- For students, you see evidence of their study and vacation times.
- If 2 documents give different names, the person has supporting documents showing why they're different, e.g. marriage certificate or divorce decree.

Educational & Professional Qualifications

Candidates should be asked to bring to their interview either originals or certified copies or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post. If for any reason this is not possible, the school should ensure that the successful candidate provides this before their appointment and start date is confirmed.

DBS Disclosure

All candidates should be asked to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity to satisfy DBS requirements, i.e. either a current driving licence or passport including a photograph, or a full birth certificate, plus documents such as a utility bill or financial statement that shows the candidate's current name and address, and where appropriate change of name documentation. More information can be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service Website - <http://carecheck.co.uk/>.

The successful candidate will be required to complete a DBS application. The LA provides a service for this and the clearance process for this is done via an on-line system which provides:

- an electronic application form and identity verification, eliminating the need to complete a lengthy paper based form;
- an in-built validation that flags any errors prior to the form being submitted;
- an average turnaround for a clearance of 1 week.

Each school has a nominated verifier who is responsible for registering applicants onto the e-DBS system, confirming their identity and monitoring the progress of applications, liaising with the County Hall DBS team and the applicant as required.

8. Successful Candidate – Post Interview and Job Offer

A post-appointment checklist can be found in section 4b which schools may find useful.

8.1 Starting Salaries for Internal/External Appointments

Teachers

There is no automatic portability of pay assumed when determining salary for newly appointed teachers. However, when determining the remuneration of a teacher, the Principal and/or Governing Body must consider its own pay policy and the teacher's particular post within its staffing structure.

Support Staff

Academies may choose to follow the Local Authority salary policy, however, where this is not the case, Academies may determine pay and grading arrangements for their support staff through local agreement with the recognised Trade Unions, although it should be remembered that collective agreements and terms and conditions for existing staff transferred when the Academy formed.

Internally Appointed Candidates (Grade 17 – 9)

Where Academies have chosen to follow the Local Authority salary policy, on promotion it is advised that the candidate is appointed to the minimum point on the scale. If there are special circumstances where a Principal considers that an increase in excess of the minimum is merited then it is advised they obtain agreement from the Governors prior to any formal offer is made to the candidate. Reference should always be made to the schools pay policy.

Externally Appointed Candidates (Grade 17 – 9)

Where Academies have chosen to follow the Local Authority salary policy, it is advised that the starting salary of an externally appointed candidate is made at the minimum point on the scale. However, Principals do have the discretion to pay at a point within this scale if the candidate is already paid on a higher salary or where their experience is beneficial to the school. It is advised they obtain agreement from the Governors prior to any formal offer is made to the candidate, and this should be covered in the schools pay policy.

Internally and Externally Appointed Candidates (Grade 5 – 8)

For Grades 5 – 8 spot salary applies - [Pay Award and Pay Scales](#)

Transferred Staff from another Local Authority

If a candidate is appointed to a post who has transferred from another Local Authority employer to a post on the same grade, it is advised that they are transferred at their current salary point.

Grade 17 Appointments Non Apprentices

With effect from 1 October 2015 all Grade 17 posts will be advertised with a starting salary at Point 6. All employees, irrespective of their age, will be paid according to the evaluated grade of the post.

Apprentices

With effect from 1st January 2013 the Local Authority determined that employees appointed as Apprentices will be paid the National Minimum Wage (NMW) for their age not the NMW rate for Apprentices. Should trainees successfully attain a substantive post, their salary would then reflect the grade for the post.

Schools are able to pay an appropriate rate taking into account the NMW and the grade applicable to the post.

8.3 **Full References**

References are sought to aid the selection process and validate information given by the prospective employee. In addition they can aid the assessment of a potential employee's character, honesty and reliability. They are particularly important in roles that involve 'regulated activities' with children or vulnerable adults as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, or roles that are subject to National Minimum Standards or Quality Standards.

When the successful candidate has been offered and accepted the post the school should then request full references, where not previously obtained. The successful candidate should be informed that their appointment will not be confirmed and a start date given until the school has received and verified all references and pre-employment checks. Template reference proformas can be found for teaching and non-teaching staff at section 4c.

Roles subject to DBS

- Two written references are required for all roles subject to DBS clearance. Verbal references cannot be accepted.
- Specific questions about the employees' suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults should be asked.
- The reason why the previous employment ended must be asked.
- A full employment history and written explanation of any gaps in employment is required.

Roles not requiring a DBS

- One reference must be obtained from the current/most recent employer
- If a second reference can't be obtained, the successful candidate should be asked to provide an alternative referee.
- Verbal references can be accepted. However, the questions from the reference template must be followed and the responses recorded
- If no second reference is available then the Headteacher/manager should establish the status of other pre-employment checks carried out on the individual and is advised to obtain further advice from HR before making an offer of employment.

Referees

Referees can be asked to return a reference via email for speed; however, it the email address should be is verified first to ensure it is a work email address. The Principal/Manager should also request that a hard copy is sent with company stamp/compliment slip for authenticity.

At least 1 reference must be received from the current or most recent employer and should be written by the current or previous manager, supervisor or someone more senior than the successful candidate.

If the successful candidate does not have a current or previous employer a reference may be accepted from a previous educational establishment, a Job Centre contact or a personal contact who works as or has retired from a recognised profession or a 'person of good standing in the community' (see Examples of recognised professions or 'a person of good standing in their community.docx'). In this case the reference does not need to be from a work email or with a company compliment slip, stamp or business card.

If the successful candidate was previously self-employed a reference may be accepted from a previous client or their accountant.

In normal circumstances, pre-written references or 'to whom it may concern' references will not be accepted without verification. However, an exception to this may be made if a previous employer has wound down or ceased to exist and has issued a pre-written reference to the employee at the end of the employment.

References received should be retained on the employees' centrally held file.

8.4 **Offer Letter**

A model offer letter can be found at section 4b. The offer letter should contain the following information:

- Title of Post.
- Salary grade.
- Full-time or, if part-time, the number of hours per week.
- Permanent or fixed term.
- Start date and, if fixed term, the termination date and reason for the fixed term nature of the post.
- Confirmation that a full Statement of Particulars will be issued by payroll provider in due course.
- A reminder, where appropriate, that the appointment is subject to satisfactory clearance by the disclosure procedure, medical clearance, confirmation of qualifications and satisfactory completion of a probationary period (applicable for non-teaching posts only).

8.5. **Medical Clearance**

Short Pre-employment Health Questionnaire

The successful candidate should be asked to complete a short pre-employment medical questionnaire (the baseline health questionnaire can be found at section 4b).

Candidates for crossing patrol and driver posts must undergo a more in-depth health assessment and should be referred to occupational health.

Full Pre-Employment Health

If the prospective employee has said “yes” to any of the questions on the short pre-employment medical questionnaire, then they are not medically cleared to start in post and **must** be subject to a Full Pre-Employment Health Questionnaire. To obtain this the school should refer them to occupational health.

9. **Unsuccessful Candidates**

9.1 **Feedback**

The unsuccessful candidates should be informed verbally that they have been unsuccessful and offered confidential feedback on their interview. If there was another candidate who matched the requirements of the person specification consider whether to delay informing him/her that they were unsuccessful until the successful candidate has accepted the post.

9.2 **Retention of Recruitment Paperwork**

Although there is no requirement that application forms and interview notes for unsuccessful candidates should be retained for a set period we would recommend that the school keeps these for a period of 6 months to a year. This is because the time limits in the various discrimination Acts would mean any claims should have been made within 6 months and the retained information may better enable you to defend a claim (a year may be more advisable as the time limits for bringing claims can be extended). It is important that Governors set a time period to retain records and this is adhered to.

Successful job applicant's documents will be transferred to the personnel file in any event.

10. **Monitoring of Information**

The Equality Act 2010 states that all Schools and Pupil Referral Units with at least 150 staff have a statutory duty to publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty on an annual basis. This information must include information relating to people who are either employees of the school or people affected by its policies and practices (e.g. pupils). For further information regarding publishing Equality Data please see Section 3b.