



# Merrydale Infant School

## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY

Chair's signature...Mrs E Surtees

Head's signature.....Mark Tipple-Johnson

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## **Rationale**

In our school we recognise that it is vital for us to adopt recruitment and selection procedures and other Human Resources management processes that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children, or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

## **Context**

The measures described in this policy are applied to everyone who works, or seeks to work, in our school, who is likely to be perceived by the children as a safe and trustworthy adult. Our school and the LA must ensure that the terms of any subcontract require that the contractor abides by our safer recruitment and selection policy. Contractor's compliance will be monitored.

We recognise that volunteers are also seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults and we therefore undertake the same CRB checks on regular volunteers as for employed or contracted staff. Should a volunteer's role be a 'one-off' e.g. accompanying pupils on a trip or helping at a school fete these measures are unnecessary provided that the person is not left alone and unsupervised in charge of children. We therefore take the same safer employment approach as for employed or contracted staff.

Where volunteers are recruited by another organisation to work in the school, e.g. sports coaches, the school should obtain assurance from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted.

## **Elements of Safer Practice**

In our school safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage of the process. It starts with the process of planning the recruitment exercise, and, where the post is advertised, ensuring that the advertisement makes clear the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It also requires a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about applicants. The main elements of the process include:

- Ensuring the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- That the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children;
- Obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants, and taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies;
- Obtaining independent professional and character references that answer the specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and following up any concerns;
- Minimum of 2 references.
- A face to face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as his/her suitability for the post. This interview will also include a question to establish and verify candidates' understanding of safeguarding requirements.
- Verifying the successful applicant's identity.
- Verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed.
- Checking his/her previous employment history and experience.
- Verifying that s/he has the health and physical capacity for the job.
- The mandatory Criminal Records Bureau checks.

## Safer Recruitment Practice

We have an explicit written recruitment and selection policy and procedure that comply with local and national guidance. The policy details all aspects of the process and links to our child protection policy and procedures.

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Our statement will be included in:-

- Publicity materials
- Recruitment websites
- Advertisements
- Candidate information packs
- Person specifications
- Job descriptions
- Induction training

## Planning and Advertising – Guidance

Planning is vital to successful recruitment. It is important to be clear about what mix of qualities, qualifications and experience a successful candidate will need to demonstrate, and whether there are any particular matters that need to be mentioned in the advertisement for the post in order to prevent unwanted applications. Also it is essential to plan the recruitment exercise itself, identifying who should be involved, assigning responsibilities, and setting aside sufficient time for the work needed at each stage to be completed so that safeguards are not skimped or overlooked. For example, it is important to organise the selection process to allow at least two references to be obtained on short listed candidates before interview.

When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement will include a statement that the successful candidate will be required to undertake a criminal record bureau check and that the school follows the safer recruitment and selection policy

## Application Form

The school uses the Leicester City Council Application for Employment and Personal Details forms. These forms include:

- Full identifying details of the applicant including current name, date of birth, current address and National Insurance number.
- Details of education and training qualifications.
- A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of post secondary education/training, part time or voluntary work and full time employment, with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment.
- A declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers at Leicester City Council and the School (including Councillors and Governors).
- Details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer and normally two referees should be sufficient. (NB where an applicant who is not currently working

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with children has done so in the past it is important that a reference is also obtained from the employer by whom the person was most recently employed in work with children.) The form makes it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.

- A statement of the personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to his/her suitability for the post advertised and how s/he meets the person specification.

The personal details form includes an explanation that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and therefore that ALL convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as 'spent', must be declared. It requires a signed statement that the person is not on the Protection of Children Act list, disqualified from working with children or subject to formal disciplinary proceedings and either has no convictions, cautions or bind-overs or has attached details of their record in sealed envelope marked confidential.

The application form states that:

- Where appropriate the successful applicant will be required to undertake a disclosure from the CRB at the appropriate level for the post;
- The prospective employer will seek references on short listed candidates and may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications before interview.
- If the applicant is currently working with children, on either a paid or voluntary basis his/her current employer with children will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children, including any in which the penalty is 'time expired' (that is where a warning could no longer be taken into account in any new disciplinary hearing for example) and whether the applicant has been the subject of any child protection concerns and if so the outcome of any enquiry or disciplinary procedure. If the applicant is not currently working with children but has done so in the past, that previous employer will be asked about those issues.
- 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.

Applicants for teaching posts are also asked for:

- The DfE reference number.
- Whether they have qualified teacher status.
- Whether they are registered with the GTC for England.

## **Job Description**

These clearly state:

- The main duties and responsibilities for the post.
- The individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children s/he is responsible for, or comes into contact with.

## **Person Specification**

- Includes the qualifications and experience, and any other requirements need to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people.
- The competences and qualities that the successful candidate must be able to demonstrate

## **Information Pack to Candidates**

The pack will include a copy of:

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- The application and personal details form and explanatory notes about completing the forms.
- The job description and person specification.
- Any relevant information about the School, the recruitment process and statements of relevant policies such as equal opportunities, the recruitment of ex-offenders etc.
- The school's Safeguarding Policy Statement.
- A statement of terms and conditions relating to the post.

## Scrutinising and Short Listing

All applications are scrutinised to ensure that they are fully and properly completed; that the information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies and to identify any gaps in employment.

All candidates are assessed equally against the criteria contained in the person specification without exception or variation.

## References

The purpose of seeing references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They are always sought and obtained directly from the referee.

Ideally, references are sought on all short listed candidates, including internal ones, and should be obtained before the interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee, and taken up with the candidate at interview.

All requests for references seek objective verifiable information and not subject opinion. A copy of the job description and person specification for the post for which the person is applying is included with all requests and every request should ask:

- About the referee's relationship with the candidate, e.g. did they have a working relationship, if so what; how long has the referee known the candidate and in what capacity.
- Whether the referee is satisfied that the person has the ability and is suitable to undertake the job in question, and for specific comments about the applicant's suitability for the post, and how s/he has demonstrated that s/he meets the person specification.
- Whether the referee is completely satisfied that the candidate is suitable to work with children and, if not, for specific details of the referee's concerns and the reasons why the referee believes the person might be unsuitable.

In addition to the above, requests addressed to a candidate's current employer, or previous employer in work with children, will also seek:

- Confirmation of details of the applicant's current post, salary and sick record.
- Specific verifiable comments about the applicant's performance history and conduct.
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to in which the disciplinary sanction is current.
- Details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to involving issues related to the safety and welfare of children or young people, including any in which the disciplinary sanction has expired and the outcome of those.
- Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or young people or behaviour towards children or young people and the outcome of those concerns eg whether the allegations or concern was investigated, the conclusion reached and how the matter was resolved, or whether there were any outstanding issues.

## **Involving Pupils**

Where it is deemed appropriate involving pupils in the recruitment and selection process in some way, or observing short listed candidates' interaction with pupils is common, and recognised as good practice. There are different ways to do this. For example, candidates for teaching posts might be asked to teach a lesson; short listed candidates might be shown round the school by pupils and a governor or senior member of staff and/or meet with pupils and staff.

## **Interviews**

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements, and explore their suitability to work with children. The selection process for people who will work with children will always include a face-to-face interview even if there is only one candidate.

In addition candidates' ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This could include:

- Motivation to work with children and young people.
- Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children and young people.
- Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours and attitudes to use of authority and maintaining discipline.
- Explain that if the applicant is short listed any relevant issues arising from his/her references will be taken up at interview.

## **Invitation to Interview**

In addition to the arrangements for interviews – time and place, directions to the venue, membership of the interview panel – the invitation reminds candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore, including suitability to work with children.

The invitation will also stress that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who he or she claims to be, and that the person will be required to complete an application for a CRB disclosure straight away. Consequently all candidates are instructed to bring with them documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy CRB requirements.

Candidates are also asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post, e.g. the original or a certified copy of a certificate, or diploma, or a letter of confirmation from the awarding body. NB If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of his/her relevant qualification must be obtained from the awarding body.

## **Interview Panel**

We always ensure we have a panel of at least two people which allows one member to observe and assess the candidate, and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview.

The members of the panel:

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- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment;
- Are appropriately trained.
- Meet before the interviews to:
  - Reach a consensus about the required standard for the job to which they are appointing.
  - Consider the issues to be explored with each candidate and who on the panel will ask about each of these.
  - Agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification.

The panel agrees in advance a list of questions for all candidates for each position. Supplementary questions may be asked for clarification.

In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, the interview panel also explores:

- The candidate's attitude toward children and young people.
- His/her ability to support our agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Any gaps, short periods or regular changes in the candidate's employment history.
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee.
- Ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in the light of the requirement for a CRB check.

## Conditional Offer of Appointment

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate is conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references.
- Verification of the candidate's identity.
- A satisfactory CRB disclosure.
- Verification of qualifications.
- Verification of professional status when required eg GTC registration, QTS status, NPQH.
- (For teaching posts) verification of successful completion of statutory induction period (applied to those who obtained QTS after 7 May 1999)
- (For non-teaching posts) satisfactory completion of the probationary period.

All checks will be:

- Confirmed in writing.
- Documented and retained on the personnel file (subject to certain restrictions on the retention of information imposed by the Data Protection Act).
- Followed up where they are unsatisfactory or there are discrepancies in the information provided.

Where

- The candidate is found to be on List 99 or the PoCA List or the CRB disclosure shows s/he has been disqualified from working with children by a court; or
- An applicant has provided false information in, or in support of, his/her application; or
- There are serious concerns about an applicant's suitability to work with children

the facts will be reported to the police and/or the DfE Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit.

## Post Appointment Induction

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There is an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed to the school, including teaching staff, regardless of previous experience. The purpose of induction is to:

- Provide training and information about the establishment's policies and procedures.
- Support individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been engaged.
- Confirm the conduct expected of staff and volunteers within the school
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities.
- Enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.
- Induct volunteers.

## **Criminal Records Bureau Checks**

CRB checks will be monitored.

## **Monitoring and review**

A named governor participates in the school's training with regard to the safeguarding procedures. This policy is reviewed annually by the governing body.