

St Augustine's Catholic Primary



Staff Recruitment and Selection Policy

A. CONTEXT

Making safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children an integral factor in Human Resource management is an essential part of creating safe environments for children. This guidance should be applied to everyone who works in school including those who do not regularly come into contact with children but are seen as safe and trustworthy because of their regular presence in school including unpaid volunteers.

B. ELEMENTS OF SAFER PRACTICE

Safer practice in recruitment means thinking about and including issues to do with child protection and 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 organisation'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.

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 resolving any discrepancies or anomalies;
- Obtaining independent professional and character references (prior to interview) that answer specific questions to help assess an applicant's suitability to work with children and following up any concerns;
- A face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children as well as her/his suitability for the post;
- Verifying the applicant's identity (prior to interview);
- Verifying the applicants right to work in the UK
- Verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed;
- Checking her/his previous employment history and experience;
- Verifying that she/he has the health and physical capacity for the job;
- Disclosure Barring Service check
- Prohibition check (Teachers)

- Disqualification by Association check (if applicable)

C. SAFER RECRUITMENT PRACTICE

1. Recruitment and selection policy statement

“St Augustine’s Catholic Primary School” is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.”

This statement will be included in: -

- Recruitment website / Advertisements
- Candidate information packs
- Person Specifications and Job Descriptions
- School prospectus

2. Planning and Advertising

The advertisement will include a statement about the employer’s commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and reference to the need for the successful applicant to undertake a Disclosure Barring Service check, as well as the usual details of the post and salary, qualifications required, etc.

3. Application Form

The school uses the CES (Catholic Education Service Application form), all other forms and CVs are not acceptable.

For applicants for all types of post the application form will obtain:

- Full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names, date of birth, current address and National Insurance number;
- A statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the position for which she/he is applying with details of the awarding body and date of award; **applicants will be asked to bring proof of qualifications to interview.**
- A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education/training, part-time and voluntary work as well as full time employment, with start and end dates, explanations for periods not in employment or education/training and reasons for leaving employment; Any gaps must be completed.
- A declaration of any family or close relationship to existing employees or employers (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. N.B. where an applicant who is not currently working 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 should make 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 her/his suitability for the post advertised and how she/he meets the person specification.
- It should include 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 should include a statement regarding equality of opportunity confirming our commitment to equality of opportunity in all areas of our work. The statement should state that all individuals will be treated in a fair and equal manner and in accordance with the law, regardless of gender, marital status, race, religion, colour, age or disability.

It should record that:

- Where appropriate the successful applicant will be required to provide a clearance Certificate from the Disclosure Barring Service 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, her/his current employer 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 should also be asked:

- To provide their DfES reference number;
- Whether she/he has Qualified Teacher Status (QTS); and,
- Whether she/he is registered with the GTC for England.

4. Job Description

This will clearly state:

The main duties and responsibilities of the post;

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

5. Person Specification

This will:

Include the qualifications and experience and any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children;

The competencies and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate; and, explain how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process.

6. Information Pack to Candidates

The pack will include a copy of:

The application form;

The job description and person specification;

Any relevant information about the Local Authority and school and the recruitment process;

A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post.

7. Scrutinising and Short-listing

All applications will be 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. Incomplete applications or CV's will not be accepted and will be returned for completion.

As well as reasons for gaps in employment, the reasons for a history of repeated changes of employment without any clear career or salary progression, or a mid-career move from a permanent post to supply teaching or temporary work, will also need to be explored and verified.

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

Online searches are a useful addition to the checks we make during our safer recruitment process. There are a number of examples where information has come to light about a candidate which would not necessarily have been found by completing the usual checks. Candidates will be informed that online searches may be conducted for shortlisted candidates.

8. References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will be sought on all short-listed candidates, including internal ones and be obtained before interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview. **It is up to the person conducting the recruitment to decide whether to accede to a candidate's request to approach her/his current employer only if she/he is the preferred candidate after the interview, but it is not recommended as good practice.** In any case where a reference has not been obtained on the preferred candidate before interview, the interviewing panel will ensure that a suitable reference is received before a person's appointment is confirmed.

References will seek objective verifiable information and not subjective opinion. A copy of the job description and person specification for the post for which the person is applying should be 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 and if so what and 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 she/he has demonstrated that she/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;
- That the reference is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission and is a relevant, factual account and that it may be discussed with the applicant.

In addition to the above, requests addressed to a candidate's current employer, or a previous, employer in work with children, should 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; and,
- Details of any allegations or concerns that have been raised about the applicant that relate to the safety and welfare of children or behaviour towards children and the outcome of those concerns e.g. whether the allegations or concern was investigated, the conclusion reached and how the matter was resolved.

On receipt references should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. **If all questions have not been answered or the reference is vague or unspecific, the referee should be telephoned and asked to provide written answers or amplification as appropriate.** The information given should also be compared with the application form to ensure that the information provided about the candidate and her/his previous employment by the referee is consistent with the information provided by the applicant on the form.

Any discrepancy in the information should be taken up with the applicant.

Any information about past disciplinary action or allegations should 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 in which no further issues have been raised, are less likely to cause concern than more serious or recent concerns, or issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

9. Other Checks before Interview

If a short-listed applicant claims to have some specific qualification or previous experience that is particularly relevant to the post for which she/he is applying that will not be verified by a reference, it is good practice to verify the facts before interview so that any discrepancy can be explored at interview. The qualification or experience can usually be verified quickly by telephoning the relevant previous employer and asking for written confirmation of the facts.

10. Involving Pupils

Observing short-listed candidates' interaction with pupils (teaching posts) is part of the interviewing process at St Augustine's. Short-listed candidates for a teaching post will be observed teaching at least part of a lesson and may be shown round the school by pupils and a governor or senior member of staff and/or meet with pupils and staff.

11. Interviews

The interview process will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and explore their suitability to work with children.

12. Invitation to Interview

The invitation will inform candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children.

It will also remind candidates that the successful candidate will be asked to provide evidence of Identity. Consequently all candidates should be instructed to bring with them documentary evidence that will satisfy DBS requirements, i.e. a current photo driving licence or passport, a full birth certificate, plus a document such as a utility bill or financial statement which shows the candidate's current name and address.

Documentation must be provided in the event of any change of name.

Candidates will also be asked to bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications that are necessary or relevant for the post. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies written confirmation of her/his relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body. A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications will be kept for the personnel file.

13. Interview Panel

A panel of at least two people allows one member to observe and assess the candidate and make notes, while the candidate is talking to the other. At least one senior member of staff and one member of the Governing Body must have Safer Recruitment qualifications. At least one member of the interview panel must be a senior staff member/Governor with Safer Recruitment qualifications.

The panel cannot agree in advance a list of questions for each individual candidate that they will not deviate from, but they can agree a set of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post and the issues they will explore with each candidate based on the information provided in the candidate's application and references (if

available). A candidate's response to a question about an issue will determine whether and how that is followed up.

14. Scope of the Interview

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

- The candidate's attitude toward children;
- Her/his ability to support the school's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Gaps in the candidate's employment history;
- Concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee; and,
- Ask the candidate if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS check.

If, for whatever reason, references are not obtained before the interview, the candidate should also be asked at interview if there is anything she/he wishes to declare/discuss in light of the questions that have been (or will be) put to her/his referees.

15. Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre Appointment Checks

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references.
- Verification of the candidate's identity & right to work in the UK.
- DBS clearance
- Prohibition check (Teachers)
- Disqualification & disqualification by association check if applicable.
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness.
- Verification of qualifications.
- Verification of professional status where required.
- Verification of successful completion of statutory induction period

All checks should be:

- Confirmed in writing.
- Documented and retained on the personnel file.

D. DBS CHECKS ON OVERSEAS STAFF

A DBS clearance should be completed on staff from overseas unless it is verified that the applicant has not previously lived in the UK. **If an applicant has lived outside of the UK in the past 5 years, a Certificate of Good Conduct must be obtained. This would be requested from the LA on our behalf and must be provided in English.**

E. POST APPOINTMENT INDUCTION

There should be an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed in an establishment, including teaching staff, regardless of previous experience. At St Augustine's School an Induction pack is completed for all new staff (and volunteers & students). Both the school representative and new staff member sign the induction form confirming they have received induction training. This is retained in the staff members personnel file. All new staff are given Safeguarding training.

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 within the school;
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and,
- 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.

The content and nature of the induction process will vary according to the role and previous experience of the new member of staff or volunteer, but as far as safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is concerned the induction programme should include information about and written statements of:

- Policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare e.g. child protection, whistleblowing, anti-bullying, anti-racism, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, internet safety and any local child protection/safeguarding procedures;
- Safe practice and the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of staff and pupils in the establishment;
- How and with whom any concerns about those issues should be raised; and,
- Other relevant personnel procedures e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistle blowing.

The programme should also include attendance at child protection training appropriate to the person's role.

F. MAINTAINING A SAFER CULTURE

It is important that all staff in an establishment have appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident about carrying them out. Also that staff, pupils and parents feel confident that they can raise issues/concerns about the safety or welfare of children and that they will be listened to and taken seriously. That can be achieved by maintaining an ethos of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and protecting staff which is supported by:

A clear written statement of the standards of behaviour and the boundaries of appropriate behaviour expected of staff and pupils that is understood and endorsed by all;

Appropriate induction and training;
 Regular briefing and discussion of relevant issues; and,
 Including relevant material from the framework for Personal Social and Health
 Education in the curriculum.

G. MONITORING

Monitoring of both the recruitment process and induction arrangements will allow for future recruitment practices to be better informed. It should cover:

- Staff turnover and reasons for leaving;
- Exit interviews; and,
- Attendance of new recruits at child protection training.

Appendix I

Checklist for Appointing Panel

Candidates for the post of :						
Candidates name	Complete application form	Reference 1	Reference 2	Certificates for qualifications	Satisfactory interview response to safeguarding questions	Identity

