



Harrison College Ltd

Safer Recruitment Policy

Purpose and Scope

This document is intended for all College staff who are responsible for the appointment of staff (on whatever employment basis), volunteers and Directors. It summarises their key responsibilities with regards to the recruitment process (including the recruitment procedures to safeguard children).

1. Recruitment – Your Responsibilities

- To ensure that the College meets its commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and make it clear to all applicants that all staff and volunteers are expected to share this commitment.
- To recruit the most suitable person for the role.
- To treat all candidates fairly.
- To ensure the reputation of the College as an employer is enhanced.

2. Planning the Recruitment Exercise

It is essential that the recruitment exercise is carefully planned, with those involved having clear responsibilities. This will ensure that measures to ensure children are safeguarded are not skimmed and that robust processes are in place to prevent discrimination. A vacancy owner must be appointed for each vacancy and they will oversee the entire recruitment process for that post. The vacancy owner will be the Principal or their nominated individual.

3. Safeguarding Children

The measures described below apply to all staff who apply to work in the College, as all are in a position where children are likely to perceive them as safe and trustworthy adults. This includes staff employed by contractors and volunteers who have frequent unsupervised contact with children.

A rigorous evidence-based selection process is vital if we are to deter, reject and identify applicants who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with children.

This document covers the key aspects of the full 'Safer Recruitment in Education' guidance which can be found in full at www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection. However, it must be remembered that the DBS process is not in itself a guarantee that children will be safeguarded. As stated in the Richard Inquiry Report (2004) – *'the harsh reality is that if a sufficiently devious person is determined to seek out opportunities to work their evil, no one can guarantee that they will be stopped. Our task is to make it as difficult as possible for them to succeed'*. In addition to DBS checks it is therefore vital that the College's Child Protection Policy is fully complied with. The College is fully committed to encouraging a culture where it is safe for children, parents and staff to raise concerns.

The following steps are in place so that we can meet our objective to have a recruitment process that safeguards children.

- All College recruitment literature will confirm our commitment to safeguarding children and refer to the requirement for Enhanced DBS checks.
- The College Application Form requires all applicants for teaching posts to confirm their teacher reference number, if they have QTS status and whether they are registered with the GTC.
- All job descriptions will make reference to the responsibility for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.
- All person specifications will include specific reference to suitability to work with children.

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- Comprehensive information will be obtained from all applicants and any discrepancies or anomalies will be resolved at interview, as will the reasons for frequent career/job changes and for a move from permanent to supply teaching.
- Independent professional and character references will be obtained which will specifically confirm the candidate's suitability to work with children and the details of their employment history.
- The recruitment process will always include a face-to-face interview that explores the candidate's suitability to work with children.
- The successful candidate's identity will be verified, and their professional qualifications will be checked. Copies will be kept in their personnel file.
- Enhanced DBS checks will be required for all successful candidates.
- Always speak to the Principal if you have any concerns about a candidate and refer to the Child Protection Policy.

4. Equal Opportunities

The College welcomes job applications from a wide cross section of the community. All staff involved in the recruitment process need to be aware that Government legislation prevents discrimination on the grounds of:

- Ethnic Origin
- Gender
- Disability
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Age

Unlimited damages may be awarded in cases of discrimination.

5. Discrimination

Discrimination can be direct (deliberate) or indirect (result of an unfair process). Direct discrimination is relatively easy to spot, but indirect discrimination is more subtle and can be difficult to detect. An example of indirect discrimination could result from saying that a role requires high levels of physical strength (which means fewer women will meet the criteria). If the role does require that level of strength, it is not a discriminatory criterion. However, if the role does not require that level of strength, it is indirect discrimination because fewer women can meet the criteria.

Remember there is no requirement for intent, for indirect discrimination to have taken place.

6. How to have a robust Recruitment Process that provides Equal Opportunities

- Agree objective criteria at the outset of the selection exercise, e.g. identify the qualifications, skills/experience and competencies required.
- Have an open selection, i.e. that is advertised either internally or externally.
- Ensure decisions and the reasons for them are recorded and are based on the agreed objective criteria.
- Ensure that at least two people are involved at each stage of the decision-making process.
- Make reasonable adjustments if requested by the candidate, e.g. a dyslexic candidate may require more time to complete a test.
- Do not ask questions on the application form or at interview that may be viewed as discriminatory.
- Ensure Equal Opportunities are monitored, and managers are aware of their responsibilities.

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- Treat all candidates with respect.
- Involve Human Resources if you have any concerns and especially if you receive any complaints.

7. Application information Packs

All application packs are issued by College HR /Administrator who will ensure that literature, job specifications, person specifications and application forms are compliant with employment law and the safeguarding procedures (please see Section 3 above). Only applications on a Standard Application Form will be accepted.

8. Sifting Application Forms

Make sure you judge the candidates against the objective criteria you have identified and record the reasons for your decisions. Do not make assumptions – you can only judge the candidate on the information they have provided on their application form. Do not, for example, assume that all candidates who attended Y University will have an excellent academic understanding of a particular subject.

Note any discrepancies in the application form, e.g. gaps in employment history will need to be followed up if the candidate is invited to interview.

9. References

References for short listed candidates should be called prior to interview. Ensure specific questions are asked to confirm their suitability to work with children and to confirm their employment history.

10. Selection Process

Ensure that all elements of the selection process gather information to test whether people meet the objective criteria that have been identified as required for the role. The selection process will typically involve aptitude tests, lesson observations and interviews. For more senior roles psychometric tests may also be used.

11. Interviews

Interviews are an important source of gathering information to predict how the candidate will perform in the role. They are also a key means of supplying the candidates with information as to why they should join the College. Most claims of discrimination relate to the interview element of the selection, so it is essential to structure the interview in advance.

12. Structured Interviews

Clearly candidates should be made to feel welcome and be given a good idea what to expect in the interview. Candidates should be introduced to the panel, made aware of the likely time of the interview, the areas to be covered, that notes will be taken and that they will have the opportunity to ask questions at the end of the interview.

Question areas should focus on the attributes required to do the role. Question areas should be planned in advance and all candidates should be asked similar questions. However, there will inevitably be differences, e.g. you will wish to discuss with some candidates the reasons for any

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gaps/discrepancies in their CV, the reasons for frequent moves of job, the reason for moving from a permanent role to a supply teaching role.

There are five characteristics that the College regard as intrinsic to the success of the individual: Character, Attitude, Energy, Drive, and Talent. The best way to gather information in these areas is to ask questions regarding:

- a) Their CV and dig into the choices they have made
- b) The challenges they have faced and how they have reacted
- c) What are their strengths, what do they enjoy doing best at work.

Evidence must be gathered as to the candidates' suitability for working with children. All candidates must be made aware of the importance of the College's safeguarding policy.

The evidence provided by candidates should be scored using an agreed rating system.

13. Types of Questions

- Only limited use of closed questions should be used, generally they should be used to check information e.g. do you have a GCSE in English?
- Generally open questions such as – what, why, how, tell me about – should be used to encourage the candidates to talk.
- Open questions may be followed up with probing questions to ensure you are getting all the relevant facts, e.g. 'what was your precise role in the project', 'what exactly was your contribution', 'did you prepare the report recommendations in full'.
- Be careful not to give the answer away by asking leading questions, e.g. 'Do you agree with me that...'
- Behavioural questions tend to be best for providing information about how the candidates will behave in the role as past behaviour is the best predictor of how people will behave in the future. An example would be 'tell me about how you dealt with a difficult decision you have had to make'.
- Hypothetical questions are a good way to stretch candidates and see how they can 'think on their feet'. However, care should be taken as it is possible to get idealised answers, e.g. 'Faced with an irate parent I would remain cool, calm and collected and ensure I dealt with all the issues in priority order', may tell you little about how the candidate actually behaves in real life.
- Stress questions which are deliberately contradictory or aggressive are unlikely to be of significant value and increase the likelihood of complaints. Candidates will clam up and form a negative image of the organisation.
- Avoid asking multiple questions that may confuse the candidate.
- Avoid asking questions that could be construed as being biased on the grounds of sex, race, disability, sexual orientation or age, e.g. don't ask 'are you planning to have any more children', 'would it worry you being a non-Christian working in this environment'.

14. Interview Dangers to be Aware of

- **Like** – people tend to appoint people who remind them of themselves and that they like.
- **Halo and Horns** – interviewers tend to mark the candidate the same in all areas, even though the evidence in each area may be quite different. Interviewers often form early impressions that can be difficult to change, i.e. they tend to look for evidence to back up their initial 'hunch'.
- **Stereotypes** – clearly these can be dangerous if not challenged, for example, 'I've interviewed with someone who told me all Welsh people talk too much'.

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- **Candidate is struggling to answer questions** – try to rephrase the questions to see if it aids the candidate’s understanding. If you still have a limited response, you could offer the areas the candidate may wish to consider in their answer. However, if this happens more than once you will need to reflect this in your assessment of the candidate.
- **Candidate is saying too much** – ask the candidate to be brief and ask them to return to the question that has been asked. If this happens more than once again you will need to reflect this in your assessment of the candidates.
- **Answering Questions** – it is important that the view that the College welcomes candidates from all sections of the community is reinforced.

15. Selection Interview Skills

- **Establishing Rapport:** This means putting candidates at their ease, encouraging them to respond and generally being friendly. If you establish rapport candidates are more likely to talk freely about their strengths and weaknesses. When responding to answers be appreciative, e.g. ‘Thank you, that was helpful’, not, ‘well that did not show you in a good light’.
- **Listening:** When interviewing you must concentrate on what the candidates are telling you. If you play back to candidates your understanding of what they have said for them to confirm or amend, it will ensure that you have fully comprehended the message they are delivering. In a good interview the candidate will have done 80% of the talking.
- **Keeping Control:** See earlier comments about candidates who say too much or too little.
- **Note Taking:** You won’t remember everything so it’s useful to take notes of the key points.

16. When you have selected the Preferred Candidate/s

This document covers the key aspects of the full ‘Safer Recruitment in Education’ guidance which can be found at www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection

a) **Proof of Identity, DOB and Address**

Proof must be provided of identity such as birth certificate, driving licence or passport before appointment is made. The proof should include name, date of birth, address and photographic identity. Identity checks also apply to staff supplied by agencies or other third parties.

b) **DBS Checks**

Enhanced DBS checks must be undertaken. It is therefore vital that when the DBS Disclosure request is made it is made clear that the individual will be working with children.

c) **Supply Staff, Volunteers, Governors and Others**

Supply agencies must provide written confirm that all appropriate checks are being undertaken. A copy of DBS Disclosures in cases where information is contained must be provided. The same procedures apply for staff employed by outsourced contractors, e.g. catering, security, etc.

Volunteers and Directors who come into regular unsupervised contact with children should also undertake Enhanced DBS Disclosures.

d) **Visitors, etc**

It is not necessary for DBS Disclosures for visitors who will not be left alone with children, for volunteers who assist with one-off day trips and for contractors who undertake emergency repairs, and students undertaking work experience. Building contractors who have no

contact with children do not require DBS checks. However, in all cases Enhanced DBS checks should be undertaken if there is any concern.

e) **Starting Working Pending a DBS**

Principals may let staff start working pending a DBS disclosure but must ensure that adequate supervision is in place. It should be made clear to staff that extra supervision is being put in place, who is undertaking the supervision and that the arrangements will be reviewed every 2 weeks until the Disclosure is received.

f) **Checks on Qualifications/ GTC Registration**

Checks must be made that candidates have any qualifications legally required to undertake the job by seeing the relevant certificate or diploma. Copies of the documents are not acceptable. The main relevant qualification for teaching staff will be QTS. Copies should be taken of any certificates and placed on the personnel file.

In some circumstances a QTS certificate will not be required to teach e.g. GTP's, Overseas Trained Teachers. A copy should be made and kept in the personnel file of the individual. GTC Registration should also be confirmed. Please see further guidance at www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection.

g) **Reference Checks**

References should always be obtained directly from the referee themselves. References will be sought from two employers. Ideally references will be obtained prior to interview. In any event references should be considered and any issues resolved prior to appointment being confirmed. The reference questions must include relationship with candidate (how do they know each other and for how long), does the person meet the requirements of the role, are they completely suitable to work with children (and if not why not). The referee should be reminded that they have responsibility to provide a reference that is accurate and does not contain any material misstatement or omission. The candidate's current employer should be asked to:

- confirm details of current post, (salary and sickness record can only be requested once a candidate has been offered the role)
- comment on performance and conduct
- confirm details of any current disciplinary sanction
- confirm details of any disciplinary procedures the applicant has been subject to, related to the safety and welfare of children or young people, including any in which the disciplinary action has expired
- details of any allegations related to the welfare of children or young people and the outcome of those concerns
- reasons for leaving if no longer with their most recent educational employer

If references are vague or incomplete, they must be followed up. Clearly if an issue was satisfactorily resolved some time ago or an allegation was determined to be unfounded these are not likely to cause concern. However, more serious or recent concerns or issues that were not satisfactorily resolved are more likely to cause concern.

h) **Unsatisfactory DBS Checks**

If any information is uncovered by the Enhanced DBS checks the Principal and the Board of Directors will need to give careful consideration as to whether the offer of employment can continue. Factors to take into account will include:

- How relevant is the conviction?
- How serious is the conviction?
- How long ago did it occur?
- Is there a pattern of offending?
- What was the applicant's explanation, and have their circumstances changed?
- Was the offence disclosed by the applicant?

i) **Foreign Nationals**

Schools need to ensure that foreign nationals have permission to work in the UK.

For candidates from an EEA Country, they will be required to provide evidence of having obtained settled status under the Settlement Scheme by 30 June 2021. After this date those without settled status will be required to apply for a VISA which allows them to work in the UK. Where they are already in possession of this candidates must provide original evidence at the earliest opportunity.

17. Central Record of Recruitment and Vetting Checks

The College must keep a central record of recruitment and vetting checks. These records should include:

- A full record of all staff who are employed to work at the College providing education
- A full record of all staff who are employed as supply staff to the College
- A full record of all others who have been chosen by the College to work in regular contact with children e.g. volunteers, people who provide additional teaching such as sports coaches.

All Staff appointed to the College require an Enhanced DBS Check and once DBS checks have been received they should be kept for a maximum of 6 months.