

# Recruitment and Selection Policy

## **Adoption Arrangements and Date**

All statutory policies in the Trust are ultimately the responsibility of the Trust Board. To enable it to discharge this responsibility appropriately and in collaboration with the constituent schools, the Trust Board will

1. set a full Trust wide policy,
2. set a 'policy principles' document (a framework within which Headteachers develop a full and appropriately customised policy),
3. or delegate to Headteachers or LGBs the power to develop their own policy.

<b>Review Body:</b>	<b>Pay &amp; HR Committee</b>	<b>Adopted:</b>	<b>19 November 2018</b>
<b>Leadership Grp Responsibility:</b>	<b>Human Resources Director</b>	<b>Date of next review:</b>	<b>Nov 2021</b>
<b>Policy Type:</b>	<b>Non-statutory</b>	<b>Review period:</b>	<b>3 years</b>

**This is a Level 1 Policy against the Trust Governance Plan.**

## **1 Background**

Tenax Schools Trust believes that staff are the most important of our resources, and it is only through the appointment and retention of exceptional teaching and support staff that we can achieve the best possible learning outcomes for the children and young people in our schools.

Our recruitment policy is built on the following principles:

- Tenax Schools Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share that commitment.
- The Trust seeks to attract the best possible applicants for its posts, who are in sympathy with the Trust and schools' ethos and distinctive educational aims.
- The appointment process will deter prospective applicants who are unsuitable to work with children and take all possible steps to identify and reject those applicants.
- Our appointments process is transparent and appropriate to the level of the post
- Jobs are advertised nationally, locally, within the Trust, or individual schools depending on the circumstances.
- Applications must always be made in writing.
- The appointments procedure takes due regard of the guidance and regulations contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education, the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014, which also includes Academies and Free Schools, the Trust Equal Opportunities policy and the Equality Act 2010.

## **2 Identifying vacancies**

Vacancies may arise through Trust/school growth, or as a result of the resignation or retirement of an existing staff member. On receipt of a resignation, the Headteacher in consultation with CFO or HR Director will assess the need to replace the role, giving consideration to the duties and hours of the post and any other known changes anticipated. Posts will not automatically be replaced on a like-for-like basis. Posts that were not included in the approved budget for the year, or any post that takes the staffing cost beyond 85% of GAG funding, must be agreed by the Chief Financial Officer prior to advertising.

## **3 Advertising**

A Candidate Information pack should be compiled, and contents will depend on the nature and seniority of the role but may include:

- Welcome letter from the Trust CEO
- Headteacher letter
- Job description and person specification
- Guidance notes for candidates, including closing, shortlisting and selection dates. This will also include details of the pre-employment checks and safeguarding criteria for the post.
- School/area information

Posts will be advertised using media appropriate to the grade and the needs of the school. Where a post relates to an additional responsibility and will not result in additional headcount for the school, the post will be advertised in school only. Other posts should be advertised internally at Trust schools, using the school/Trust websites and using either local or national advertising media as appropriate to the grade.

All adverts will include the statement below:

*Tenax Schools Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. All appointments are subject to pre-employment checks, including satisfactory references and an Enhanced DBS check. [More information on our recruitment checks can be found in the candidate pack for this post.]*

#### **4 Applications**

All schools will use the Trust application forms for either Teaching or Non-teaching posts. Some vacancies may require the use of the application form for internal candidates, although applications from internal candidate may be considered on the basis of a letter of application and supporting statement. The recruiting manager is responsible for ensuring that, where internal candidates are not completing the internal application form, that applications have equal opportunity to demonstrate that they meet the criteria when considered alongside external candidates.

For schools advertising on Kent Teach, their template application form can be used as this meets the same criteria for Safer Recruitment purposes.

A letter of application, or Curriculum Vitae cannot be accepted alone.

Applications must be checked for any accessibility requests to allow applicants to participate fully in the selection process.

#### **5 Shortlisting**

All candidates' applications will be considered and should be assessed against the criteria in the person specification, with a summary record kept of all applications. Applications will be reviewed to identify gaps in employment, and areas for discussion at interview.

Shortlisting should be carried out by a minimum of 2 people, at least one of which to be trained in Safer Recruitment.

Wherever possible internal candidates will be interviewed as part of our commitment to continuing professional development. Where internal candidates are not shortlisted, feedback should be given regarding their application.

References will be requested on shortlisted candidates, using the relevant template reference request form (teaching or non-teaching). In all cases the current and most recent employer will be used as referees. References must cover the last three years of employment as a minimum; candidates should be asked for additional contact details if required. Where a candidate has a

previous employer in the Children's Workforce, a reference should always be requested from that employer, even where this is not the most recent employer.

For full details on reference checks see Appendix 1.

Shortlisted candidates will be given the opportunity to advise the recruiting manager of any reasonable adjustments that may be required in the selection process to enable the candidate to participate fully and equitably. Discussion with the candidate prior to interview may identify specific measures that need to be taken at the interview stage.

Adjustments will be dependent on the individual needs of the candidate, but the following are examples:

- candidates may benefit from having the interview at a particular time of the day, for example if they have a condition that causes them to be drowsy at certain times of the day, they need to take medication or eat at specific times, or they have difficulty using public transport during the rush hour. Employers should be prepared to be flexible about the timing of the interview.
- candidates with restricted mobility may require a change to the interview venue, e.g. to be held on the ground floor or with wheelchair access.
- An induction loop may be required for an applicant with a hearing impairment
- some candidates may benefit from having someone to meet them from public transport, or in the car park, to accompany them to the location of the interview.
- where a test forms part of the selection process (e.g. in-tray exercise) candidates are required as with the application form, it may be necessary to provide the instructions for the test in an alternative format, and to allow the candidate to present his or her answers using an alternative method. It may also be necessary for the employer to allow the candidate additional time to complete the test, or to provide a reader or scribe. In some instances, coloured filters may be required to help a candidate with visual difficulties or dyslexia read written instructions.

All selection tests used must be relevant to the requirements of the role.

Adjustments can only be made to the process where candidate advise the Trust of their needs. An individual's need for adjustments must not form part of the decision-making process.

## **6 Selection**

Selection activities and interview questions will be finalised after shortlisting in order to address any areas of weaker evidence against the person specification. All selection processes will include an interview, during which there will always be questions designed to ascertain that the candidate shares the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This will be done largely through asking for examples from experience and probing areas of concern.

Interviews should always be face-to-face. Telephone or video-conferencing may be used at the shortlisting stage, for example for overseas candidates, but this should not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview, unless exceptional circumstances. Interviews will, where possible take place

with the same panel, on the same day. Candidates will always be required, alongside demonstrating their ability to carry out the role for which they have applied, to:

- Give a satisfactory explanation for any gaps in employment
- Explain any anomalies or discrepancies in information available to recruiters, including any anomalies from references already received
- Declare any information that is likely to be revealed in pre-employment checks

Teachers should always be observed teaching a lesson, and for senior appointments, pupils/students should be involved in at least one selection task.

Candidates should be asked to bring photo ID with them to the interview. A copy should be taken and signed by a member of the selection panel. This will be compared to the evidence used by the ID verifier for the DBS application to ensure that the person attending the interview is the person for whom the DBS application is being completed.

## **6 Offer**

Successful candidate should be made a conditional offer of employment by telephone, and this will be followed up by a written offer as soon as practical. The conditions of offer will vary according to the post – see Appendix 2 for details.

## **7 Induction and probationary periods**

All staff who are new to the school or Trust should receive full induction training that will include the school's safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices within two weeks of the date of commencement of employment where practical. On appointment, all new employees will be provided with Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and will be required to read and ensure confirm their understanding of the document. All new employees will also be made aware of the Whistleblowing Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct and Keeping Data Safe guidance.

Regular meetings should be held during the first 6 months of employment between the new employee(s) and the appropriate manager(s). For support staff, these meetings will form part of the formal review of the probationary period. Any concerns will be identified and the employee informed at the earliest possible stage.

## **8 Record Keeping**

Applications, notes taken at shortlisting and interview should all be retained for a period of six months and then destroyed.

All recruitment documentation, including copies of identity document and qualifications, will be retained as part of the personnel file for the new appointee.

## Appendix 1

### Guidance on the request and assessment of employment references.

*This Guidance takes account of paragraphs 134-137 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2018.*

References should be taken up before candidates are invited to interview, so that any gaps in employment history or other discrepancies can be probed during the interview process. Where relevant, this may include internal candidates.

It is understood that in some circumstances candidates may not wish for their current employer to be contacted prior to offer. Such requests should be considered sensitively and consent should be obtained from the candidate to contact any current employer prior to interview.

References will be sought directly from the referee. The relevant reference request form (for teaching or non-teaching staff), must be completed by all referees. References which are generic statements will not be accepted, particularly if they appear to have been prepared for another purpose. References or testimonials (sometimes called 'open references') provided by the candidate will never be accepted.

References will be accepted only if the person writing has the authority of the organisation to write them, and if they are signed. Photocopied references cannot be accepted. Faxed or emailed references will always need to be followed by a signed hard copy.

References should be requested according to the following hierarchy:

- One reference will always be required from the current or most recent employer.
- Where candidates have previous experience within the Children's Workforce, one reference should always be requested from the last Children's Workforce employer. In the event that this is a school, one reference must be from the headteacher.
- References may also be requested from a place of worship, or voluntary organisation, where the identity and authority of the referee can be verified.
- "Personal" references should be avoided.

Professional/work references must not be sent electronically to a personal email address. Where a request is sent by email, steps should be taken to verify that the email address is a valid organisation account.

No reference request should be sent to a shared email address e.g. [smithfamily@emailprovider.com](mailto:smithfamily@emailprovider.com) or [janetandjohn@emailprovider.com](mailto:janetandjohn@emailprovider.com)

Where information about past disciplinary action or allegations is disclosed, this should be considered carefully as part of a holistic assessment of a candidate's suitability to work with children and young people.

Where necessary, referees will be contacted by telephone or e-mail in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies, previous employers who have not been named as referees may be contacted in order to clarify any anomalies or discrepancies. A detailed written note will be kept of such exchanges.

Where possible the recruiting manager should confirm the identity of the referee using a follow up telephone call.

When checking references, the recruiting manager should ensure that the employment dates, salary and reason for leaving in the reference match the details in the application form, in addition to checking the content of the reference. References should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily.

References should be scrutinised and any contradictions or concerns resolved satisfactorily before the appointment is confirmed.

All references should be signed and dated by the Headteacher, or School Business Manager (support staff posts only) to confirm they are satisfactory.

Recruiting managers are reminded of the requirement in Keeping Children Safe in Education to take proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required. This may include requesting additional references, overseas checks etc.

## **Appendix 2.**

### **Conditional Offers**

All offers of employment will be conditional on:

#### **All staff:**

- A satisfactory Enhanced check from the Disclosure and Barring Service and check against the Children's Barred List (where working in regulated activity)
- Where applicable, supplementary Overseas Checks. Each applicant should be assessed individually (and record details on personnel files) and advice sought from Human Resources if required. The Trust recommends that schools should usually undertake an overseas criminal record check if a candidate has resided overseas for a period of 3 months, or longer, in the five years prior to applying or a position at the school.
- Identity Check and verification of entitlement to work in the UK.
- Satisfactory pre-employment health clearance.
- Receipt of a minimum of 2 references satisfactory to the Trust (see guidance on references at Appendix 1).
- Provision of original qualification certificates, as per "essential" criteria in the person specification. Photocopies cannot be accepted.

#### **For teaching/learning support staff:**

In addition to the above, all qualified teachers will be checked against the prohibited teacher list, regardless of post applied for. Furthermore, relevant checks will be made against the European Economic Area regulating authority teacher sanctions lists.

Where a teaching assistant is undertaking work defined as "teaching work" checks will also be made against the Prohibited Teachers List.

All prohibitions, sanctions and restrictions are checked by authorised persons logging into the Secure Access portal.

#### **For management posts:**

Where management is defined as members of the Trust senior leadership team and in schools, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and in secondary schools, department heads, checks must be undertaken against the S128 Prohibited list.

#### **In primary schools:**

Relevant staff will be required to make a declaration that they are not disqualified from working in early and later years childcare provision under the Childcare Act 2006, and the

Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018. These Regulations disqualify a candidate from working in a relevant setting as detailed below. Where an applicant would be disqualified under these regulations an offer of employment is conditional on the receipt of a waiver from Ofsted.

Staff are covered by this legislation if they are employed and/or provide early or later years childcare, or are directly concerned with the management of such childcare. Early years childcare covers children from birth until 1<sup>st</sup> September following their fifth birthday, i.e. up to and including Year R. Later years childcare covers children above the age of five years, but who have not attained the age of eight in childcare provision out of school hours. This does not include extended school hours for co-curricular learning activities, but does include childcare at breakfast or after-school provision.

**This includes:**

*All headteachers, deputy and assistant headteacher in Trust primary schools, who are considered to be directly concerned with the management of such provision.*

*All staff working in school managed nursery provision.*

*All teachers and teaching assistants working in Early Years classes, including any PPA cover.*

*All midday meals supervision for Early Years classes.*

*All staff working in wrap-around care provision.*

**The regulations do not cover staff who:**

*Only provide education, childcare or supervised activity during school hours to children above reception age; or*

*Only provide childcare or supervised activities out of hours for children who are aged eight or over; and*

*Have no involvement in the management of relevant provision.*

Staff will not automatically be required to make a declaration if they are only occasionally deployed, and are not regularly required to work in relevant childcare as described above.

Full Guidance on the application of the Regulations is provided in the Trust's Disqualification (Childcare Act) Guidance July 2018.

**Any appointing manager considering the withdrawal of a conditional offer as a result of pre-employment checks must consult with Human Resources Director before withdrawing the offer. The relevance of any disclosure identified in the pre-employment checks will be assessed against the role's essential criteria, and, where appropriate, a risk assessment and control measures will be considered.**

**Tenax Recruitment Policy Addendum – effective from 23 March 2020**

**Addendum in response to the Coronavirus national emergency and associated legal changes, and lasts for whilst the Coronavirus Health Protection (England) Regulations 2020 are in force.**

**Selection**

Whilst the policy states:

Interviews should always be face-to-face. Telephone or video-conferencing may be used at the shortlisting stage, for example for overseas candidates, but this should not be a substitute for a face-to-face interview, unless exceptional circumstances.

These are exceptional circumstances and for the period of school partial closures due to the coronavirus, schools may substitute traditional face-to-face interviews for video-conferenced interviews using an appropriate platform such as zoom.

**References**

Whilst the preference remains to have hard copy, signed references, until schools are open more widely to facilitate the receipt of post, electronic references should be sought and records kept of the verification of the author – e.g. telephone call to confirm email address etc.

**Pre-employment checks – temporary changes**

When recruiting, schools and trusts must continue to adhere to the legal requirements regarding pre-appointment checks. Please note that the following temporary changes have been made to the DBS standard and enhanced ID checking guidance:

- ID documents to be viewed over video link
- scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted
- the applicant will be required to present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role (the change came into effect from 19 March 2020)

In addition, the [Home Office guidance](#) regarding face-to-face interviews when checking the right to work has been revised. As of 30 March 2020, the following temporary changes have been made:

- checks can now be carried out over video calls
- job applicants and existing workers can send scanned documents or a photo of documents for checks using email or a mobile app, rather than sending originals
- employers should use the Employer Checking Service if a prospective or existing employee cannot provide any of the accepted documents

### **Record Keeping**

Video conference interviews may be recorded for the purposes of ensuring the whole interview panel has access to the interview in the event of internet or connection failures. The recording should be deleted as soon as the interview assessment records have been completed. Written notes/records from interviews are to be retained securely and returned to the school HR Manager or School Business Manager for filing not later than the full re-opening of schools. Surplus copies should be disposed of as confidential waste, and interviewers must delete, and remove from their electronic “deleted items” or “recycling bin” any personal data, including application forms, references, scans of ID or qualification information or other personal information necessary for the selection process.

Candidates must present the original DBS certificate to the headteacher on their first working day in school, along with the originals of any scanned documents used for the DBS check. These must be checked thoroughly for authenticity, photocopies must be taken, signed and dated in the usual way, and retained on the personnel file.

Candidates must sign a hard copy of their application form when they first attend site.

**Distributed and approved electronically by Trustees on 14 May 2020**