



## North Wolds Federation

### Safer Recruitment Policy

September 2015

At the time of writing, September 2014, both Andrew Smith (Executive Headteacher), Nichola Allerston (Head of School Market Rasen), Rhiannon Schaffer (Head of School Nettleton) and Mike Eckersley (Governor) have the certificate for safer recruitment training.

#### **A) Statement**

This 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: -

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

#### **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 our 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. Main elements of the process include:

- Ensuring the job description makes reference to the responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Ensuring that the person specification includes specific reference to suitability to work with children;
- Obtaining and scrutinising comprehensive information from applicants.
- Taking up and satisfactorily resolving any discrepancies or anomalies;
- Obtaining independent professional and character references 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 his/her suitability for the post;
- Verifying the successful applicant's identity through photographic identification e.g birth certificate plus driving licence/passport or passport size photograph endorsed by a Solicitor, JP, Doctor or last employer (all endorsements should include the endorser's address). Additionally documentary evidence of home address should also be submitted.
- Verifying that the successful applicant has any academic or vocational qualifications claimed through presentation of original certificates/documents;
- Checking his/her previous employment history and experience;
- Verifying that s/he has the health and physical capacity for the job;
- Undertaking an Enhanced DBS disclosure application (which includes a check of List 99 and the PoCA List. It is important not to rely solely on the DBS disclosure to screen out unsuitable applicants. These checks are an essential safeguard, but they will only identify individuals who have been convicted, will only be able to disclose other information where it is available, or identify those listed as unsuitable to work with vulnerable clients. There will be some individuals who are unsuited to working with children who will not have any previous convictions, and will not appear on List 99 or the PoCA List. A DBS disclosure is inclusive of checking List 99 and the POCA list.

### **C) Planning and Advertising**

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 skimmed or overlooked.

The person specification will need careful thought and drafting. It is also good practice to make sure at the outset that all the other material, e.g. the application form, job description, and information/guidance for applicants that will form part of the pack to be sent to prospective applicants is up-to-date, and clearly sets out the extent of the relationships/ contact with children and the degree of responsibility for children that the person will have in the position to be filled.

When a vacancy is advertised, the advertisement should include;

- A statement about the employer's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- A reference
- Where appropriate to the need for the successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure check via the DBS
- The usual details of the post and salary, qualifications required, etc.

### **D) Application Form**

Employers should use an application form to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants. It is not good practice to accept curriculum vitae drawn up by applicants in place of an application form because these will only contain the information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details.

For applicants for all types of posts the form should obtain:

- Full identifying details of the applicant including current and former names
- Date of Birth
- Current address
- National Insurance Number
- Statement of any academic and/or vocational qualifications the applicant has obtained that are relevant to the position for which s/he is applying with details of the awarding body and date of award
- A full history in chronological order since leaving secondary education, including periods of any postsecondary education/training, any part-time/ voluntary work as well as full time employment.
- Start and end dates should be given in each case with 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 (including councillors and governors where relevant)
- Details of referees. One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer, and normally two referees should be sufficient. The form should make it clear that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends.
- 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).
- 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.
- 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. 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 require a signed statement that the person is not on List 99, disqualified from working with children, or subject to sanctions imposed by a regulatory body, and either has no convictions, cautions, or bind-overs, or has securely attached to the application form such detail in a sealed envelope marked confidential
- It should indicate that: where appropriate the successful applicant will be required to submit a DBS Disclosure application for an Enhanced check of criminal record.
- In cases where the successful applicant is a foreign national the individual should be asked to obtain a "Certificate of Good Conduct" from the national embassy here in the UK as this will enable "trackability" of certificate, if required.
- In cases where the successful applicant is a UK national and has indicated that they have lived, or worked abroad for a period greater than 3 months, they too will be required to obtain a "Certificate of Good Conduct".

### **E) Job Description**

This should clearly state:

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

contact with.

- Reference to an Enhanced DSB Disclosure check

### **F) Person Specification**

This should include:

- Qualifications and experience.
- Any other requirements needed to perform the role in relation to working with children and young people.
- The competences and qualities that the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate explaining, how these requirements will be tested and assessed during the selection process.
- Explanation that if the applicant is short listed any relevant issues arising from his/her references will be taken up at interview.

### **G) Information Pack to Candidates**

The pack should include a copy of:

- The application form, and explanatory notes about completing the form;
- The job description, and person specification;
- Any relevant information about the school and the recruitment process, and statements of relevant policies such as the school's policy about equal opportunities, the school's Child Protection Policy.
- A statement of the terms and conditions relating to the post;
- Guidance about the DBS Disclosure process

### **H) Scrutinising and Short listing**

All applications should 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 should not be accepted and should be returned for completion. Any anomalies or discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny should be noted so that they can be taken up as part of the consideration of whether to short list the applicant.

As well as reasons for obvious 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, also needs to be explored and verified.

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

### **I) References**

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They should always be sought and obtained directly from the referee. The school does not accept references or testimonials provided by the candidate, or on open references and testimonials, i.e. "To Whom It May Concern".

References will be sought on all short listed candidates, including internal ones, and will 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. In exceptional circumstances it might not be possible to obtain references prior to interview, either because of delay on the part of the referee, or because a candidate strongly objects to their current employer being approached at that stage, but that should be the aim in all cases. In any case where a reference has not

been obtained on the preferred candidate before interview, the prospective employer must ensure that it is received and scrutinised, and any concerns are resolved satisfactorily, before the person's appointment is confirmed.

All requests for references should 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.

On receipt references should be verified by a follow up phone call and 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 his/her 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, where 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 where issues that were not resolved satisfactorily. A history of repeated concerns or allegations over time is also likely to give cause for concern.

#### **J) 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 s/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.

#### **K) Involving Children**

Involving children in the recruitment and selection process in some way is common, and recognised as good practice. There are different ways of doing that. For example young people might form part of an interview panel; candidates might be asked to engage in an interactive exercise with children e.g. teaching a class. When planning children involvement, care must be taken to consider risks and implement strategies to minimise them.

#### **L) Interviews**

The interview should assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements, and explore their suitability to work with children. Issues identified within the individual's reference must be discussed.

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.

#### **M) Invitation to Interview**

In addition to the arrangements for interviews - time and place, directions to the venue, membership of the interview panel - the invitation should remind candidates about how the interview will be conducted and the areas it will explore including suitability to work with children. Enclosing a copy of the person specification can usefully draw attention to the relevant information.

The invitation should also stress that the identity of the successful candidate will need to be checked thoroughly to ensure the person is who s/he claims to be, and that where a DBS disclosure is appropriate that person will be required to complete an application for an Enhanced DBS Disclosure straight away. Consequently where an appointment decision cannot be made immediately following interviews, all candidates may be asked to complete a DBS Disclosure application and should, therefore, bring with them documentary evidence of their identity that will satisfy DBS Disclose application requirements.

Candidates should also be 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. If the successful candidate cannot produce original documents or certified copies, written confirmation of his/her relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body.

A copy of the documents used to verify the successful candidate's identity and qualifications must be kept for the personnel file.

Although it is possible for interviews to be conducted by a single person this is not recommended. It is better to have a minimum of two interviewers, and in some cases, e.g. for senior or specialist posts, a larger panel might be appropriate. 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. It also reduces the possibility of any dispute about what was said or asked during the interview. One member of the panel should have received training in recruitment practices and for teaching staff; one of the panel should have completed safer recruitment training.

The members of the panel should:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointment.
- Be appropriately trained, (it is recommended that one member of interview panels should have undertaken training on recruitment and selection process and associated legislation).
- 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 those.
- Agree their assessment criteria in accordance with the person specification.

The panel must 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. Where possible it is best to avoid hypothetical questions because they allow theoretical answers. It is better to ask competence based questions that ask a candidate to relate how s/he has responded to, or dealt with, an actual situation, or questions that test a candidate's attitudes and understanding of issues.

#### **N) 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
- His/her 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. (It is acceptable to ask individual issues relating to information contained within references)

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

### **O) Conditional Offer of Appointment: Pre Appointment Checks**

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

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- Verification of the candidate's identity
- Where appropriate, a satisfactory DBS Disclosure that includes a check of List 99 and the PoCA list.
- Verification of the candidate's medical fitness
- Verification of original qualifications
- Verification of professional status where required
- The manager should seek advice from its HR or Personnel Services Provider, if a Disclosure reveals information that a candidate has not disclosed in the course of the selection process
- All checks should be: confirmed in writing, documented and retained on the personnel file, and, 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 DBS 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 should be reported to the police and to any relevant Professional Body if appropriate.

Ideally a DBS disclosure should be obtained before an individual starts work. Where it is necessary to engage a member of staff / volunteer where the DBS disclosure is outstanding the head teacher will complete a written risk assessment and ensure the employee is appropriately supervised. In all cases an Enhanced DBS Disclosure application must have been applied for and all other recruitment checks completed. Arrangements should be put in place to ensure the individual will have no unsupervised contact with children until such time as clearance has been obtained via the Disclosure Certificate and confirmed to the Line Manager.

Appropriate supervision for staff who start work prior to the result of a DBS disclosure being known needs to reflect what is known about the person concerned, their experience, the nature of their duties and the level of responsibility they will carry. For those with limited experience and where references have provided limited information the level of supervision required may be high. For those with more experience and where the references are detailed and provided strong evidence of good conduct in previous work a lower level of supervision could be appropriate. For all staff without completed checks it should be made clear that they are subject to this additional supervision.

The nature of the supervision should be specified and the roles of staff undertaking the supervision spelt out. The arrangement should be reviewed regularly, at least every two weeks until the DBS disclosure is received.

### **P) DBS Checks on Overseas Staff and UK Residents Who May Have worked or resided overseas.**

The DBS and the DfES have issued new guidance for overseas applicants., as from May 2006, a DBS disclosure is required to be undertaken regardless of whether the applicant has had no UK residency.

A "Certificate of Good Repute" from the home embassy/home country is also required. Additionally any overseas member of staff appointed between April 2002 and the end of April 2006 should undertake a retrospective DBS Disclosure check and also provide a "Certificate of Good Repute" from the home embassy/home country.

In all cases where the preferred candidate is a UK resident and has worked or been resident overseas in the previous 5 years, the applicant should request a "Certificate of Good Repute/Letter of Good Conduct" from the home embassy of that country.

The requirement of obtaining this certificate through the home embassy is to provide the ability to authenticate the document, if required. It should also reduce the need and cost to undertake any potential translation requirements.

Although the DBS provides an Overseas Information Service not all countries provide this information. For some countries there is a fax-back service, which provides employers with details of criminal record information.

In all cases mentioned above this should be linked to other required checks, especially those of identity and qualifications, and satisfactory references.

The DBS does not have any involvement in applications by individuals to overseas authorities.

### **Q) Post Appointment Induction**

There is an induction programme for all staff and volunteers newly appointed in the school.

The purpose of induction is to:

- Provide training and information about the school'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.
- 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 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, anti bullying, anti racism, physical intervention/restraint, intimate care, whistle blowing, internet safety and any local child protection/safeguarding procedures.

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

### **R) Supply Staff**

It is important that thorough checks are made on anybody who will be working with children, both to prevent unsuitable people from gaining access to children and to maintain the integrity and confidence that services for children are safe. The same range of checks necessary for permanent staff is also required for supply staff, including those that are employed via employment agencies. Where the staff member is provided by a supply agency, the agency must undertake the checks but the employer must have confirmation that the checks have been completed. It is recommended that all agencies ensure that any staff they provide have given written consent for any conviction or other information on the disclosure to be "shared" with potential employers. Where conviction/other information has been provided via a disclosure certificate, the head teacher will request to see a copy of the disclosure and undertake a written risk assessment.



### **S) Arrangements for Deciding when Information Obtained Through DBS is Relevant**

An applicant's suitability should be judged in the light of the results of all the relevant pre-appointment checks carried out on him or her. The fact that a person has a criminal record does not automatically make him or her unsuitable for work with children.

The school, in conjunction with the registered body or person authorised to receive disclosure information, must make a judgement about suitability, taking into account only those offences that may be relevant to the particular job or situation in question.

Where disclosures come back with convictions / relevant soft information, the head teacher will undertake a risk assessment on the individual's suitability to undertake the job which should include a face to face meeting. In deciding the relevance of convictions a number of points should be considered:

- i. the nature of the offence: In general, convictions for sexual, violent or drug offences will be particularly strong contra-indications for work with children;
- ii. the nature of the appointment: Often the nature of the appointment will help to assess the relevance of the conviction. For example, serious sexual, violent, drug or drink offences would give rise to particular concern where a position was one of providing care. Driving or drink offences would be relevant in situations involving transport of children;
- iii. the age of the offence: Offences which took place many years in the past may often have less relevance than recent offences. However, convictions for serious violent or sexual offences or serious offences involving substance abuse are more likely to give cause for continuing concern than, for instance, an isolated case of dishonesty committed when the person was young. The potential for rehabilitation must be weighed against the need to protect children;
- iv. the frequency of the offence: A series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction as it indicates a pattern of behaviour.

### **T) Conclusion**

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.

This policy complies with the guidance published in the 'Safer Recruitment Toolkit' (June 2007) by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The school will review this policy every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Date Reviewed and Approved by Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Head teacher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors' Signature: \_\_\_\_\_