

SAFER RECRUITMENT POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Northern Ambition Academies Trust and our schools endeavour to ensure that we do our utmost to employ “safe” staff by following the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) together with WSCP and the school’s individual procedures.

This policy has been developed to ensure that the recruitment of staff or volunteers to work at any School within Northern Ambition Academies Trust is compliant with DfE (Department for Education) & KCSIE (Keeping Children Safe in Education) guidance regarding recruitment so that the risk of recruiting someone who intends to harm is minimised. It applies to all people who carry out work at any of the schools in the Trust, whether paid, voluntary, supplied by an agency or under a service term agreement.

This policy is an essential element in creating and maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all pupils, staff and others within the school community and aims to ensure both safe and fair recruitment and selection of all staff and volunteers by:

- attracting the best possible candidates/volunteers to vacancies
- deterring prospective candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable from applying for vacancies
- identifying and rejecting those candidates/volunteers who are unsuitable to work with children and young people

THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS

The importance of safeguarding and protecting children attending our schools will be promoted as much as possible throughout the recruitment process in order to deter would be abusers. For every post the current Northern Ambition Academies Trust application forms, contracts and recruitment forms and associated policies will be used.

Timeline

The need for a thorough safe recruitment process is paramount and timelines for the appointment of staff will vary depending on the time it takes to receive all the appropriate pre-employment checks and for the candidate to serve a notice period. It is recognised that often appointments need to take place speedily to ensure continuity of provision for the children/young people in our schools, however no appointment process will circumvent the measures described in this policy for the sake of expediency.

Job Descriptions and Person Specifications:

At the start of the recruitment process it is important to define what the responsibilities of the postholder will be, as well as the qualifications and experience required to perform the role. All job descriptions will, as a minimum detail:

- Post Title
- Who the Post reports to
- Grade/Scale of Post
- Job Purpose
- Line Management
- Characteristics of the post
- Post specific responsibilities
- Postholder specific responsibilities towards the promotion and the practice of safeguarding the welfare of children that they come into contact with through their job.

Advertisements

The advertisement for a vacancy will demonstrate our commitment to safer recruitment and vetting procedures in order to act as a deterrent to would be abusers.

All recruitment advertisements will display the following:

- Northern Ambition Academies Trust name and logo.
- Post Title
- Hours (this should indicate if full or part time)
- Grade or Scale
- Salary including any allowances offered e.g., TLR (Teaching and Learning Responsibility)
- Permanent or fixed term
- Advert Text (which should detail the main responsibilities of the post and the skills/experience required.)
- Safeguarding Children Statement: “Northern Ambition Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. The successful applicant will be required to complete an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. “
- Whether the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.
- Closing Date and Interview Date

Application forms & Packs

Where a role involves in engaging in regulated activity relevant to children, school, and colleges a statement is included in application pack provided to applicants that it is an offence to apply for the role if the applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children. Application forms/packs will make reference to a link on the website in relation to the policy of employment of ex-offenders.

Applicant must provide details of:

- Personal details, current and former names, current address, and national insurance number
- Details of their present (or last) employment and reason for leaving
- Full employment history (since leaving school, including education, employment, and voluntary work) including reasons for gaps in employment

- Qualifications, the awarding body, and date of award
- Details of referees/references
- A statement of personal qualities and experience that the applicant believes are relevant to their suitability for the post advertised and how they meet the person specification.
- A curriculum vitae will only be accepted alongside a completed application form and will not provide adequate information on its own

The following, as a minimum, will be provided to applicants:

- Northern Ambition Academies Trust Application Form and Guidance for Applicants
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Recruitment Brochure
- Northern Ambition Academies Trust Recruitment Monitoring Form

Identification of the Recruitment Panel

At least one member of the Selection and Recruitment Panel will have successfully completed training in safer recruitment.

Shortlisting

After the closing date the Recruitment Monitoring Form and Part A of the application form (which contains name and personal details) will be removed from the application before shortlisting. The shortlisting panel (minimum of 2 members) will be provided with the job description, person specification and application forms. The panel will also need to consider any inconsistencies and look for gaps in employment and reasons provided and explore all potential concerns. Candidates will be short listed against the person specification for the post; these will be recorded on the shortlisting form.

Shortlisted candidates should be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. Self-declaration is subject to Ministry of Justice guidance on the disclosure of criminal records.

This information should only be requested from applicants who have been shortlisted. The information should not be requested in the application form.

Applicants will be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. Where there is an electronic signature, the shortlisted candidate should physically sign a hard copy of the declaration at the point of interview.

The purpose of a self-declaration is so that candidates will have the opportunity to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS is received.

Online Search

Keeping Children Safe in Education paragraph 226 states as part of the Trust's shortlisting process we should consider carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened and are publicly available online which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview stage. Online searches will be looking for information that is publicly available. The HR team or the external provider appointed by the Trust will conduct the searches and only disclose information to the panel on matters that may cause concern and need to be explored at interview stage. Candidates who are shortlisted will be informed that online searches may be done as part of due diligence checks.

Completion of Relevant Conviction Form -Shortlisting

Once applicants are shortlisted a criminal record declaration form must be sent to candidates for completion and returned by applicants prior to interview.

The form will be clear about the 2020 DBS filtering changes and signpost the candidate to the Ministry of Justice website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/new-guidance-on-the-rehabilitation-of-offenders-act-1974>). There is no further obligation to signpost elsewhere.

Invitation to Interview

Candidates will receive an invitation to interview letter using the model Northern Ambition Academies Trust template which re-iterates the Trust's commitment to safeguarding and stipulates that each candidate must bring evidence (original documents only) verifying their professional qualifications, identity, right to work in the UK and documentation required for the purpose of DBS checking See Pre-Employment Checks below.

Interviews

On arrival for interview the original documents requested in the invitation to the letter will be obtained for each candidate and copied. The copies will be verified, initialled, and dated and held with the Pre-Employment Checklist pending the outcome of the interviews. The interview process will allow time for any discrepancy in a candidate's application or references to be scrutinised and clarified. Interviewers will question candidates regarding any employment gaps, criminal record disclosures, fitness for the role, previous experience, suitability for the post and their motivation to work with children. The panel will be certain they have explored all relevant areas before they offer a post.

All interviews will be carried out on a face-to-face basis. On the rare occasions where teachers have applied from overseas then it may be appropriate to interview via video conferencing. All interview panels should include a representative of the appropriate governing body and will include at least one person who has successfully completed safer recruitment training. This will enable the scrutiny of each candidate's motivation to work with children by a trained interviewer. The composition of an interview panel will reflect the nature of the post.

References

These will be requested prior to interview and will be made available to the Chair of the Panel on the day of interview. One of the referees must be the candidate's current or most recent employer and completed by a senior person with appropriate authority (if the reference is school based this should be confirmed by the headteacher/principal). Open references will not be accepted neither will references which have been provided by the candidate. Referees for all candidates will be asked specific role and child protection related questions on our reference pro-forma. This avoids references which may have been written as part of a compromise agreement and would not state any adverse qualities or incidents involving the candidate.

When references are received prior to interview, the HR Department will follow up any discrepancies or issues to enable the panel to decide with reference to all the facts available at the time. Gaps and inconsistencies will be followed up before an offer of employment is made.

Any information about past disciplinary action or substantiated allegations should be considered in the circumstances of the case. All information considered in decision making should be clearly recorded along with decisions made.

Employment Gaps

The Northern Ambition Academies Trust application form allows for candidates to inform us of any gaps in their employment history. The HR Department will check for these gaps and highlight any found to the panel. These will be investigated at interview, along with the reason for them not being disclosed on the application form. The interview panel will explore patterns of repeated change in career or employers at interview, ensuring that the reasons for this are fully explored.

Qualification Verification

At interview, essential qualifications required for the post, including those set by statute, will be verified by the HR Department/Admin Teams. Any concerns will be made known to the panel immediately. A photocopy of the original qualification certificates will be taken at interview stage and if the candidate is successful, these will be placed on their personal file. If the candidate is unsuccessful, then these, along with evidence of identity documents will be securely destroyed.

Pre- Employment & Vetting Checks

Disclosure of Criminal Conviction

Posts within schools are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (updated guidance 1975, 2013 & 2020); therefore, as a prospective employer, we encourage candidates to disclose any unspent and spent convictions.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from working with us. This will depend on the offence and the relevance of that offence in relation to the position applied for. The factors taken into account will include the responsibilities of the position, the potential for the position to have direct access to or influence over children and young people, the nature of the offence(s), the number and pattern of the offences (if there is more than one), how long ago the offence(s) occurred and the age of the offender when the offence(s) occurred.

Successful candidates will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS application form (and Disqualification by Association where appropriate). Once Enhanced DBS with barred list clearance is verified, any discrepancy in convictions will be discussed with the candidate and may lead to the offer of employment being withdrawn with immediate effect, even if the person has commenced work.

Regulated Activity

An Enhanced DBS check is needed for all staff engaging in regulated activity see page 10 for flowchart. The Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act 2021 extended safeguarding provisions to providers of post 16 Education. For most appointments, an enhanced DBS check with barred list information will be required as the majority of staff will be engaging in regulated activity. A person will be considered to be in 'regulated activity' if as a result of their work they:

- Will be responsible, on a regular basis, in any setting for the care or supervision of children; or
- Will regularly work in a school or college at times when children are on school or college premises (where the person's work requires interaction with children, whether or not the work is paid (unless they are a supervised volunteer), or whether the person is directly employed or employed by a contractor); or

- Will regularly come into contact with children under 19 years of age.

A supervised volunteer who regularly teaches or looks after children is not in regulated activity.

Post Interview Checks:

All offers of appointment to any post at a School within Northern Ambition Academies Trust should be conditional until satisfactory completion of the mandatory pre-employment checks Any offer of appointment will be subject to the following:

Employment history and references

- We will always ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, we will check with the school, college, or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and reasons for leaving. We will use a standard proforma for this purpose. References are an important part of the recruitment process and should be provided in a timely manner and not hold up proceedings.

Verification of candidate identity

- It is vital that we know who our employees are and have evidence to prove this. Evidence of identity will be sought as part of the enhanced DBS check. We will verify a candidate's identity from current photographic ID, and we will ask to see proof of address. Photocopies of documentation will be taken by the HR Department and kept on file for anyone appointed to work in one of our schools. Where a candidate is not appointed, this documentation will be securely destroyed.

Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List Check

- All employees will be considered to take part in regulated activity and therefore we will require them to be checked against the Children's Barred List and obtain an enhanced DBS check.
- There is no requirement to obtain an additional enhanced DBS check or carry out checks for events that may have occurred outside the UK, if in the three months prior to beginning work in their employment, if the applicant already has DBS enhanced clearance with the Children's barred List checks and has worked:
 - *in a school in England in a post which brought them into regular contact with children or in any post in a school since 12 May 2006; or*
 - *in an institution within the further education sector in England or in a 16-19 Academy, in a post which involved the provision of education which brought the person regularly into contact with children or young persons*

The Head of HR/HR Officer in consultation with the Principal/Headteacher will review the completed DBS check and determine if it meets the required standard. Where it does not, the subject to contract offer of employment will be withdrawn with immediate effect.

Medical Clearance

Successful candidates will be required to complete a medical questionnaire to verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. Depending on the answers given by the candidate, a referral to Occupational Health may be required to assess fitness for work. If a referral is made, then job

offers are confirmed only when a letter has been received from Occupational Health declaring them fit for the post for which they have applied.

Prohibition Order

The HR Department will ensure that a candidate who is a registered teacher is not subject to a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State. The Employer Access Online Service will be used to check this detail.

Section 128 direction

The HR Department will ensure that a candidate who has applied for a management position or trustee or governor position has a Section 128 direction check. This check is completed via the DBS barred list check.

Right to work in the UK

The HR Department will request documentation from the candidate to verify their right to work in the UK. This will be checked against the requirements of the Border Agency. Where the right to work in the UK cannot be verified, the offer of employment will be immediately withdrawn, and the Border Agency notified of the details of the applicant.

Overseas Check

Any candidate who has lived or worked outside the UK and been overseas for 6 months or more in the last 5 years will require an overseas police check. The candidate should be notified of the country or countries from which an overseas check is required. (Please see [Criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#)).

Verification of professional qualifications

As above these will be verified prior to interview and kept on the personal file of the employee.

These checks are detailed on the Recruitment File Checklist, which is audited by the Head of HR/HR Officer when all checks are complete. The Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) Employer Access Service will be used to verify any award of qualified teacher status (QTS), and the completion of teacher induction or probation.

Pre- employment checks will be made clear in the offer letter, which will state that any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory checks being received and verified. A pack of documentation for completion will be sent with the offer letter.

Other Considerations

Starting employment before receipt of DBS check

If there is a requirement for an individual to start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available, then a risk assessment (see Page 11) should be completed and held by the HR Department. A Children's barred list check will also be completed. The Principal/Headteacher/Deputy will make the decision as to whether it is appropriate for this person to start employment after reviewing the risk assessment.

Temporary Staff Employed Directly by the Trust

Staff employed on a temporary contract issued by the Trust will follow the same recruitment process as any other permanent employee. All pre-employment checks must be completed.

Peripatetic Tutors and Agency Staff (including Agency Supply Teachers)

All service providers/staffing agencies providing staff to undertake regulated activity will be required to provide evidence of the same pre-employment checks that the Trust would complete if they were directly employing the staff themselves. This should be submitted in writing and in advance of the provider starting work and should be agreed between the Trust and provider. Any information disclosed as part of the DBS check will be treated confidentially. We reserve the right to view the original copy of the disclosure from the agency if it contains additional information. Evidence of checks from external providers will be recorded on the Single Central Record.

We will carry out identity checks when the individual arrives at school.

If evidence is not provided, then the Trust will not allow Peripatetic tutors or agency staff to have unsupervised access to children.

Contractors

Children should not be allowed in areas where builders are working for Health and Safety reasons, so there should be little opportunity for workers to be unsupervised with children. It is difficult to say that there will not be times when contact with a child occurs, however this will be managed by the Headteacher of the relevant school who will use their professional judgement to determine supervision levels.

Anyone entering school premises to undertake activities which are not classed as regulated will be required to verify their identity. (See Contractors Policy). Volunteers Engaging in Regulated Activity

Many volunteers in the Trust may have the same unsupervised access to children as employees. A child will not consider a distinction between a volunteer and a member of staff when seeking help or support. An Enhanced DBS check incorporating a Children's Barred List check must be carried out prior to the volunteer starting their duties.

If such a volunteer becomes a paid employee, then all pre-employment checks must be completed except for the Enhanced DBS check as it will already be held by the Trust.

Volunteers Not Engaging in Regulated Activity

A volunteer who is supervised always does not require a DBS check as they are not engaging in regulated activity. If such a volunteer becomes a paid employee, then all pre-employment checks must be completed including an Enhanced DBS check, this should be undertaken to reflect the change from volunteer to employee status.

If it is felt, there is a requirement for a volunteer who is not in regulated activity to have an enhanced DBS check then a risk assessment should be undertaken to reflect this. In doing so they would need to consider the following:

- The nature of the work with children;
- What the establishment knows about the volunteer, including formal or informal information
- Offered by staff, parents, and other volunteers;

- Whether the volunteer has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where referees can advise on suitability; and
- Whether the role is eligible for enhanced DBS check.

All staff and volunteers who are new to the school will receive information on the Trust's safeguarding policy and procedures and guidance on safe working practices as part of their induction training.

All successful candidates will undergo a period of monitoring and will:

- Meet regularly with their line manager
- Attend any appropriate training

Single Central Record

Each school will keep a Central Record of all staff that provides confirmation that relevant checks have been taken such as:

- Verification of Identity
- Disclosure & Barring Service Check & Children's Barred List Check
- Employer Access Online (List of persons prohibited from teaching)
- Section 128 Direction Check
- Qualifications (Qualifications required to do the job and any professional registrations required – i.e., QTS)
- Right to Work in UK
- Overseas Criminal Record Checks (EEA) (applicable for any employee who has spent a period of time abroad)
- Childcare disqualification checks
- References
- Medical Check

NORTHERN AMBITION ACADEMIES TRUST - DBS RISK ASSESSMENT

This form should be completed by the appointing officer/manager where an individual commences employment/duties subject to DBS clearance and/or where information has been received on their DBS return. A copy of the completed form must be kept in the personal file and individuals must have a barred list check undertaken before commencing work. DBS regulations require that we do not record the specific details of any offences declared or returned on the disclosure form. If you require any guidance, please contact the Trust's HR Team.

Name:

Post:

Date of Offer:

Date of Appointment:

1. What is the nature of the work (including amount of contact with vulnerable parties)?
2. To what extent will the individual be supervised?
3. Level of Disclosure Needed STANDARD/ENHANCED
4. Has the individual declared any convictions/cautions? Were they honest when challenged?
4.1 Are the offences relevant? Is there a pattern of convictions?
4.2 How long ago did this happen?
4.3 Have the individual's circumstances changed? In what way?
5. Have two satisfactory references been received (including present or most recent employer and similar employment)?
6. Has full employment history including any gaps been explored with the individual? (as per inspection guidelines)
7. Is the person transferring from a similar position without a break in service of more than 3 months, if so, no supervision is needed prior to DBS
DECISION: including what additional arrangements will be put in place (if any) to supervise the individual until the DBS clearance is received
Appoint/Not Appoint

Signed Appointing Officer:

Date:

Signed Individual:

Date:

If something is subsequently returned on the DBS disclosure then this form must be revisited, and additional consideration given to the decision to appoint. Further information under these sections regarding that decision must then be recorded.