



**The Abbey**

The independent school for girls aged 3-18.

## **Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedure**

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### **The Abbey School, Reading**

## **Introduction**

Recruitment plays a key role in the success and development of The Abbey School. A professional approach to the recruitment process helps The Abbey in attracting and appointing employees with the necessary skills and experience to be successful in their role.

The Abbey School is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection of its employees is conducted in a manner that is safe, fair, efficient, effective, and promotes equality of opportunity.

The Abbey is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. Child protection and safeguarding considerations are included at every stage of the recruitment process, consistent with the statutory guidance provided in the Keeping Children Safe In Education ('KCSIE'), September 2018, part 3 ('Safer Recruitment').

This policy applies to recruitment across all employee categories.

## **Aims**

The aims of the School's recruitment policy are as follows:-

- To ensure that the School meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people by carrying out all necessary pre-employment checks.
- To ensure that the best possible staff are recruited based on their merits, abilities and suitability for the position. The School has an open recruitment process and will seek to recruit the best applicant for the job. The recruitment and selection process should ensure the identification of the person best suited to the job at the school based on the applicant's abilities, qualifications, experience and merit as measured against the job description.
- To ensure that the recruitment and selection of staff is conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation and to ensure that all job applicants are considered equitably and consistently;
- To ensure compliance with all relevant recommendations and guidance including the recommendations published by the Department for Education (DfE) Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in education (Guidance). Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and any guidance or code of practice published by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Employees involved in the recruitment and selection of staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with the provisions of this policy.

## **The Abbey Commitment statement.**

The Abbey School is committed to promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The Abbey recognises that the effectiveness and safety of its safer recruitment policy and procedures

make a major contribution to child protection by helping to deter, reject or identify people who might be unsuitable for working with children.

The policy and this procedure apply to the whole school.

Throughout the selection and recruitment procedure, the School will have regard to the guidance as set out in the aforementioned documents as well as the current ISI regulations. The school is committed to ensuring that no one will be appointed unless they fully support The Abbey School Commitment statement.

### **Policy guidelines – contents of this document**

- Safer Recruitment
- Equal opportunities
- Recruitment planning
- Job descriptions and person specifications
- Advertising
- Managing candidates
- Employment history and references
- Job offer
- Pre-appointment checks
- Appointment process
- Single central register (SCR)
- Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK
- DBS checks – additional guidance

### **Safer Recruitment**

*At least* one person on the panel interviewing and making decisions about appointing candidates will have successfully completed the Safer Recruitment Training.

### **Equal Opportunities**

The Abbey wholeheartedly supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment; and actively opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, age or disability.

We believe that it is in the organisation's best interests, and those of all who work in it, to ensure that the human resources, talents and skills of all potential employees are considered when employment opportunities arise. We apply these principles to all individuals working at all levels and grades, including Governors, Executive Team, Teachers employees, consultants, contractors, trainees, part-time and fixed-term Employees, volunteers, casual workers and agency staff.

This policy aims to foster a culture of equality and to recognise the positive contribution that each individual can make to the School irrespective of their background.

Every possible step will be taken to ensure that individuals are treated equally and fairly, that decisions on recruitment, selection, appointment and promotion are based solely on objective, and job related criteria. This policy applies to the advertisement of jobs, recruitment and appointment, training, conditions of work, pay and to every other aspect of employment. All terms and conditions of employment and related benefits shall be non-discriminatory, other than where there are legal, justifiable grounds for discriminating in the case of specific jobs

with particular requirement. Applicants for employment will be assessed according to their skills, experience and suitability for the job.

Where a recruitment agency is commissioned to assist in the recruitment to a vacant post, they will be expected to abide by the spirit of the School's equal opportunity policy, and may be asked to provide documentary evidence that they have done so.

If any applicant believes that he or she has been discriminated against in the selection process on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion or disability, he or she should raise a grievance with the hiring manager or refer the matter to the Head of HR for further investigation.

## **Recruitment Planning**

Quality time should be set aside for the preparation of supporting documentation and planning. Before commencing recruitment, it is important to consider whether there is a requirement for the role.

### Pre-interview planning

Arrange a **pre interview meeting** – that will enable you to agree:

- Approach – timetable, process – questions, testing procedure
- Focus - experience/views/challenges– also their understanding of the position
- Prepare questions, link to Job Description, and for the purposes of equal opportunities,

To ensure consistency pre-determined questions should be used. All candidates should be asked the same questions and their answers should be recorded and scored. All candidates should be asked question relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding.

## **Job Descriptions & Person Specifications**

Every position must have an up to date job description, which clearly defines the responsibilities of the role. The person specification is included within the job description. The job description must be reviewed each time a vacancy occurs to ensure that the contents are relevant and accurate. The job description should also always include the safeguarding paragraph.

## **Advertising**

To ensure equal opportunity we will advertise all vacant posts to encourage as wide a field of candidates as possible. All external roles will be advertised in the appropriate paper, professional journal, website, magazine as fits best for the role.

Internal applicants must inform their current Line Manager of their intention to apply for another internal position. Internal candidates, who are selected for interview, will be interviewed against the agreed job description and criteria.

All candidates must submit a completed Abbey application form.

## **Managing Candidates**

### Shortlisting Candidates.

At least two members of staff should carry out shortlisting of candidates. Application forms need to be carefully checked to ensure:

- They are fully completed and consistent.
- To identify discrepancies and gaps in the person's employment history.

- To identify any details regarding motivation and attitude that need to be clarified at interview

One reference should be called for each shortlisted candidate. If there is a second interview process, then the reference request may be made for only those selected for the second/final interview.

#### Invitation to interview

All applicants invited for interview are required to bring the following documentation as evidence of identity:

- right to work in the UK, qualifications and proof of address (copies will not be accepted):
- relevant educational (higher education and university) and qualification certificates
- current driving license
- current passport
- current UK work permit and/or visa (if applicable)
- full, original birth certificate
- a utility bill or bank/credit card statement which must be no more than 3 months old, showing your full name and current home address.

These will be copied for future reference

#### Interviewing

Suitable candidates should be interviewed by at least two people. At least one person on any appointment panel **must** have undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

Interviewers should independently score the candidates (rate 1-5) and then discuss the outcome together and agree the best candidate for the role. Reasons for non-appointment should be detailed.

All interview notes should be kept in a lockable cupboard for at least six months after which they can be confidentially destroyed.

#### Unsuccessful candidates

All candidates, either external or internal, should be informed if their application is unsuccessful this can be either by email, telephone, letter or face-to-face feedback

#### **Employment history and references**

Employers should always ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete. References should be sought on all short-listed candidates 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.

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. References should always be obtained, scrutinised and any concerns resolved satisfactorily, before the appointment is confirmed. They should always be requested directly from the referee and employers should not rely on open references, for example in the form of 'to whom it may concern' testimonials. If a candidate for a teaching post is not currently employed as a teacher, it is also advisable to check with the school, college or local authority at which they were most recently employed, to confirm details of their employment and their reasons for leaving.

On receipt, references should be checked to ensure that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily. The referee should be contacted to provide further clarification as appropriate: for example if the answers are vague. They should also be compared for consistency with the information provided by the candidate on their application form. Any discrepancies should be taken up with the candidate.

## Job Offer

An offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, must be conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks.

Once the satisfactory verbal references have received, a verbal job offer can be made. This will then be followed up in writing with the formal job offer letter by HR.

## Pre-Appointment Checks

Any offer of appointment to a successful candidate, including one who has lived or worked abroad, is conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, the following steps will be taken:

- verify a candidate's identity, preferably from current photographic ID and proof of address. Photocopies of all documents are taken and confirmation of 'true copy of original' signed and dated, by the recipient
- obtain a certificate for an enhanced DBS check with a barred list information where the person will be engaging in regulated activity. Refer to [Annex G of KCSIE](#), or to the official [Guide for eligibility for DBS checks](#) for more details.
- The School undertakes to discuss any matter revealed in a Disclosure with the person seeking the position before withdrawing a conditional offer of employment.
- Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working with us. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances and background of your offences.
- obtain a separate barred list check if an individual will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available.
- check that a candidate to be employed as a teacher is not subject to a prohibition order (or an interim prohibition order) issued by the Secretary of State, using the [Teacher Services system](#)
- for anyone engaged in management roles, an additional check is required to ensure they are not prohibited under section 128 provisions
- verify the candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities. A job applicant can be asked relevant questions about disability and health in order to establish whether they have the physical and mental capacity for the specific role
- verify the person's right to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission to work in the UK, then prospective employers, or volunteer managers, should follow advice on the GOV.UK website
- obtain at least two references from prior employment, or if there is good reason for these being unavailable, from other appropriate sources.
- if the person has lived or worked outside the UK, make any further checks the school or college consider appropriate. This should include a check for information about any teacher sanction or restriction that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed using the [NCTL Teacher Services system](#)
- verify professional qualifications, as appropriate.

## Appointment Process

When appointing new staff, teaching and non-teaching staff, the following documents are sent to each new starter and we ensure they are signed and returned and placed on the individuals' personal file :-

1. Job offer letter
2. Contract of employment
3. New starter details form for payroll

4. Recruitment of Ex-Offenders and SD form
5. Equal Opportunities Form
6. P46 or P45
7. Pre-employment health questionnaire
8. DBS form link ( Note the DBS cannot be completed until the relevant documents have been verified – candidates are requested to visit our office with the relevant documentation)

In addition and as appropriate, we save on each individual's personal file:-

9. Contents list of staff file
10. CV and or Application form.
11. New Employee Checklist
12. Verification of a candidate's identity (these are the same documents that are in use for a DBS check)
13. Obtain the number of the DBS certificate and make a note of the number on the Single Central Register. If a DBS check is not available at the start of employment the employee will be checked against the barred list information list and a Risk Assessment will be completed (ensuring that those without full DBS are accompanied on the premises at all times)
14. Verification of professional qualifications, as appropriate
15. Disqualification by association form
16. The Abbey Commitment statement
17. Acceptable IT User form
18. Written references covering the last five years (and preferably from two different sources)
19. Job Description for the role
20. All interview notes
21. If the new employees has lived or worked outside the UK then police checks for each country they have lived in, with consecutive dates needs to be supplied by the individual

### **Single Central Register**

22. All the relevant checks and the dates these checks were made will be entered into the school's Single Central Register of appointments, with the date each document was completed and with the checker adding their initials. This includes confirmation that the individual is not on the Prohibition from Teaching list and the Prohibition from Management lists, as appropriate.

### **Individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK**

If the person appointed is a national of a non-EEA country, a Certificate of Sponsorship may be required. This process can be complex and the timescales protracted. Please inform the HR Department as soon as possible if it is likely that the role will be filled by an individual from overseas.

In addition these individuals must supply criminal records checks for each country in which they have resided.

## **DBS Checks**

It is anticipated that all regular positions (whether voluntary or paid) will fall within the definition of 'Regulated Activity' and will therefore require an Enhanced DBS check. Until the School has had sight of the original Disclosure Certificate, the candidate will be treated as unchecked.

The Disclosure may be obtained either by asking the individual to apply for a new DBS Certificate, or by them producing a DBS Certificate which has been registered on the DBS Update Service (only applicable to DBS Certificates which have been issued since 17 June 2013). Candidates who have registered with the DBS Update Service must produce the original of their DBS Certificate, along with the required proofs of ID. In accordance with DBS guidance, the School will ask the candidate to sign a statement to say that they give The Abbey School permission to access their record on the DBS Update Service. A printout of the result will be produced and held on the candidate's file.

If the DBS is delayed, a member of the Executive Board may allow the member of staff to start work, on the following conditions:

- The appointment is not confirmed
- The DBS application has been made in advance
- A Risk Assessment is written and kept on file
- A separate Barred List check is made and kept with the Risk Assessment. This is a whole school policy
- The Risk Assessment is reviewed, as agreed in risk assessment, until the Disclosure Certificate arrives
- The member of staff is informed as to what these safeguards are.

## **DBS Checks – additional guidance**

### **Agency staff**

Where staff from agencies are used, the agency must provide written notification that an enhanced DBS has been obtained. We will check the individual's passport and obtain proof of address and record that the individual presenting themselves is the same person.

### **Trainee/Student workers**

Where trainees are sponsored by an external body it is the responsibility of the provider to carry out the necessary checks and to provide written confirmation to the School that these checks have been carried out. There is no requirement to enter these individuals on the single central register.

### **Periodic renewals for existing staff**

Regular DBS checks or barred list checks are NOT required by the School for existing staff unless there are concerns about their suitability to work with children. In this case, the School may carry out all relevant checks as if the person were a new member of staff.

### **Referral to the DBS**

There is a legal requirement for employers to make a referral to the DBS where they think that an individual has engaged in conduct that harmed (or is likely to harm) a child; or if a person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child.



We observe the requirement to report to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), within one month of leaving the School any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because s/he is considered unsuitable to work with children.

### **Volunteers**

All volunteers will be supervised at all times when they are working with children. An enhanced DBS check should be completed and a risk assessment undertaken to clarify the role of the volunteer. You must check the individual's passport and obtain proof of address and record that the individual presenting themselves is the same person.

### **Governors and Proprietors**

An enhanced DBS check for all Governors and Proprietors will be obtained prior to them being appointed. Where they have lived outside the UK they must be able to provide the relevant checks from the country they have resided in.

Checks on Governors and Proprietors are carried out by HR, including checking the individual's passport, proof of address and confirmation that the individual presenting themselves is the same person.

