



Great Learners Trust

Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure

Approved by: GLT Trustees

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1. Introduction

Recruitment and selection of new employees is one of the most important functions for the Trustees, Governing Board, Headteachers and school management. Recruiting the wrong person can be costly and time consuming. Errors in the recruitment process itself can lead to legal action against the school or the Trust. This Policy has been produced in line with 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment' guidelines and best practice in respect of diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) recruitment.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the statutory provisions & current relevant legislation.

2. Aims of the policy

- To ensure safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is an integral factor at each stage of the recruitment and selection process
- To promote DE&I (diversity, equity and inclusion) focused recruitment practices at every point to benefit from a more diverse, inclusive and engaged workforce
- To ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the appointment of all staff (both permanent & temporary) that is conducted in a fair, equal, effective and economic manner
- To adopt a safe recruitment process which helps to promote a safe culture and complements other 'safety' elements such as health and safety and school security
- To attract and recruit suitable skilled and motivated staff to help raise standards and reduce risk to children and young people
- To ensure all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff who work with pupils, including references, qualifications and Disclosure and Barring service checks
- To ensure that those that are responsible for each stage of the recruitment process will demonstrate a professional approach by dealing honestly, efficiently and fairly with all applicants

3. Key principles

- The Trustees, Governing Board and Headteacher have a responsibility to ensure that when recruiting to a post within the Great Learners Trust (GLT) the Policy is adhered to. This policy and guidance are in line with DfE and safeguarding recommendations, as well as best practice in respect of equal opportunities
- Selection will be carried out by a panel with at least two members. At least one of the panel members will have received safer recruitment training. One panel member should have also completed diversity and inclusion training
- There will be robust recruitment procedures and checks for appointing staff and volunteers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children, or is disqualified from working with children, or does not have the suitable skills and experience for the intended role
- Each school must keep and maintain a single central record of recruitment and vetting checks in line with Department for Education (DfE) requirements
- Schools must ask for confirmation that all individuals who enter the premises who have access to children e.g. contractors, agency staff, students etc. have been subject to the relevant checks by their employer and or relevant body and monitor the compliance with these measures
- The Equality Act 2010 makes it a requirement to make reasonable adjustment to the recruitment process if an applicant makes the employer aware that they have a disability. This applies to the entire recruitment process, from advertisement to appointment

4. Roles and responsibilities

The **Trustees** must:

- Ensure this policy is brought to the attention of all Governing Boards and School Leadership Teams

The **Governing Board** must:

- Ensure the school has effective procedures in place for the recruitment of all staff
- Monitor the school's compliance with them

The **Headteacher** and other managers involved in recruitment must:

- Ensure that the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and volunteers who work at the school
- Promote the welfare of children and young people at every stage of the recruitment and selection process.
- Ensure that all contractors and agencies comply with safe recruitment pre-employment checks.

In accordance with the School Staffing Regulations, the Governing Board has delegated responsibility to the Headteacher to lead in all appointments outside of the leadership group. School governors may be involved in staff appointments, but the final decision will rest with the Headteacher.

The Headteacher may delegate the selection process of staff outside of the leadership group to other managers in the school but remains responsible for the decision to appoint.

5. Equal Opportunities

Fairness in how we recruit and select our employees plays a significant part in creating an equal opportunities environment. Therefore, our aim is that every internal and external applicant for a job within the Trust / GLT school is considered against criteria, which relate only to the requirements of the job.

The Trust is aware that an applicant can allege discrimination against an employer even when there is no direct employment relationship.

All those involved in recruitment across the Great Learners Trust will pay particular attention to:

a. Discrimination under the Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act there are a number of protected characteristics which are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnerships
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex and sexual orientation

It is unlawful to discriminate due to any of these characteristics.

Unlawful discrimination could be found in:

- The offer of employment, e.g. if it were implied that applications from persons who have one or more protected characteristics would not be considered (unless a genuine occupational qualification applies see iii below)
- The terms on which employment is offered, or
- Refusing or deliberately omitting to offer employment, such as deliberate omission from a shortlist on grounds of one or more protected characteristic under the Equality Act.

b. Genuine Occupational Qualification

Where the school / Trust is seeking to recruit into a post that requires Genuine Occupational Qualification

(GOQ), the School's HR provider should be asked for advice. Legal exceptions to the above where there is a genuine occupational qualification (GOQ) are:

- Where the job needs to be held by a man or woman to preserve decency
- Where the essential nature of the job calls for a man or woman by reason of his or her physiology
- Where being of a particular racial group is a genuine occupational qualification e.g. providing care/welfare services to a racial group and those services can be best provided by a member of that racial group

C. Equal Pay

Under the Equal Pay Act 1970 there is also a requirement of equal treatment for men and women, where women and men are employed to do like work in the same employment.

d. Discrimination in recruitment on the grounds of disability

The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to eliminate discrimination against disabled people at all levels. Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment having a substantial and long-term (lasting longer than 12 months) adverse effect on the ability of the person to carry out normal day to day activities. If a disabled person is treated less favourably for a reason that relates to their disability, or there is a failure to make reasonable adjustments in these circumstances it will be seen as unlawful discrimination. The adjustments should be such that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage to able-bodied employee. For example for the purposes of selection:

- Ask candidates about any special arrangements they require for the interview prior to the day, such as disabled persons' parking, assistance from their car to the interview room, etc
- Ensure the interview room is appropriate i.e. ground level (or has a functional lift), is easily accessible for a wheelchair user, has a clear path from the door to the candidate's seat, is not unduly noisy and has adequate lighting. Under the Equality Act there is a requirement to make reasonable adjustments. It would be reasonable for an applicant with a hearing or speech impairment to be allowed to bring an interpreter or be provided with an induction loop to aid hearing and or a written copy of the questions to be asked during the interview, etc

Applicants should be asked when inviting them to interview if they will require any adjustments to enable them to attend the selection process. The following steps should be followed if there is a disabled applicant:

- Alert both reception and other members of the interviewing panel
- Modify procedures for testing or assessment
- Provide a reader or interpreter

When appointing a successful candidate, consider the need for:

- Making adjustments to the premises.
- Altering the working hours.
- Arranging for them to be given training.
- Acquiring or modifying equipment.
- Modifying instructions/reference manuals.
- Providing supervision.

For further advice regarding employing people with disabilities contact the Trust/school's HR provider.

e. Discrimination on the grounds of age

Discrimination on the grounds of age affects people of all age groups. Age discrimination is a combination of several unconscious attitudes and habits that add up to exclusion on grounds of age. These can include:

- Stereotypes and assumptions about people of defined age groups rather than treating them on their individual merits
- Perceptions that older workers cost more
- Undervaluing the skill and experience which older workers can provide

- A view that older people may be less willing to train, are harder to train or unlikely to remain long enough to justify the training investment
- A view that young people may be irresponsible or lack commitment
- Overlooking younger members of staff for promotion or management positions on the assumption they are inexperienced due to their age

Age related criteria should not be used in advertisements or person specifications.

f. Discrimination based on trade union membership

Candidates must not be refused employment on grounds of union membership e.g. because:

- They are or are not a member of a trade union
- They are unwilling to become or cease to be a member of a trade union

For further advice relating to equality in recruitment and selection contact the Trust/ school's HR provider.

6. Recruitment and selection process

To make sure we recruit suitable people, we will ensure that those involved in the recruitment and employment of staff to work with children have received appropriate safer recruitment training as well as diversity, and inclusion training.

We have put the following steps in place during our recruitment and selection process to ensure we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as well as fair in how we recruit and select our employees.

6.1 Identifying Vacancies

Vacancies arise for a variety of different reasons. These could include, but are not limited to, the resignation or retirement of a member of staff, maternity leave, staff sickness, secondment opportunities, restructuring, or through the creation of a new post.

6.2 Job Description & Person Specification

Job descriptions will define purpose, duties and responsibilities/accountabilities of posts, as well as the qualifications and experience needed to perform the job, with particular attention to working with vulnerable groups. Job descriptions will also be written in an inclusive manner, avoiding unconsciously biased language.

All posts across the Trust require an enhanced DBS Disclosure and this will be reflected in the job description and person specification relating to each post. [NB. all work in schools involves responsibility for safeguarding children, although the extent of that responsibility will vary according to the nature of the post]

A job description will normally include:

- The job purpose – why the job exists
- Main duties and responsibilities of the post
- The post-holder's specific responsibility towards the promotion and the practice of safeguarding the welfare of children that they come in to contact with through their job

A person specification will normally include:

- Qualifications required to do the job
- The skills and competencies required
- That an enhanced DBS Disclosure is required
- Issues relating to the safeguarding of children, such as:
 - Motivation to work with children
 - Ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with children
 - Emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours

Care will be taken to ensure that any discriminatory requirements are not included such as 'age limit' or 'x years of experience' and qualifications.

6.3 Advertising

Advertisements for vacancies will demonstrate the Trust's / school's commitment to safer recruitment and vetting procedures, protecting every potential applicant from unfair practice and ultimately safeguarding children as much as possible. Promoting commitment to safeguarding and child protection can act as a deterrent to would-be abusers. Thought will be given to wording, pictures and images used to ensure that they could not be considered discriminatory.

Job advertisements will also avoid stereotyping and demonstrate a commitment to attracting and retaining a diverse pool of talent in order to bring a variety of perspectives, experiences and skills to the workplace.

The following information will be included within the text of the advert:

- Name of school
- Post title
- Hours of work
- Grade or scale
- Salary (actual salary for part time)
- Permanent or temporary/fixed term stating duration if temporary or fixed term
- Brief details about what the job entails and type of skills and experience required including responsibility for safeguarding children (please see example statements below)
- Confirmation that an enhanced disclosure will be required because the role involves working with children
- Clarification on whether or not the post is exempt from the rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and the amendments to the Exceptions Order 1975, 2013 and 2020.
- Contact details
- Closing date

Example Statements re safeguarding:

- "Able to form and maintain appropriate professional relationships and boundaries with children and young people"
- For managers: "Able to ensure employees observe the requirement above". (This can be modified to suit the job)
- "Empathy and understanding of looking after other people's children from a range of backgrounds"

6.4 Application Pack

The importance of safeguarding and protecting children in school will be promoted as much as possible throughout the recruitment process in order to deter unsuitable candidates. The application pack will normally include:

- Application Form: a standard application form will be used to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants. CVs are not acceptable because these will only contain information the applicant wishes to present and may omit relevant details.
- Job Description
- Person Specification
- Relevant information about the Trust / school
- Child Protection Policy statement

Our application packs will also include a statement saying it is an offence to apply for the role if an applicant is barred from engaging in regulated activity relevant to children (where the role involves this type of regulated

activity). It will also include a copy of, or link to, our child protection and safeguarding policy and our policy on the employment of ex-offenders.

6.5 Selecting Candidates

Scrutinising and shortlisting

After the closing date, all returned application forms will be scrutinised by the shortlisting panel to ensure that:

- They are fully and properly completed
- The information provided is consistent and does not contain any discrepancies, and to identify any gaps in employment

The shortlisting panel will consist of at least two people, who are also members of the interview panel, who will meet and undertake the task together. Any applications that are significantly incomplete will not be accepted or shortlisted. Any anomalies, discrepancies or gaps in employment identified by the scrutiny will be considered in deciding 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 agency, freelance or temporary work, will also be explored and confirmed.

Any candidate who applies who declares that they have a condition which is covered by the Equality Act 2010 will be shortlisted as long as they meet the minimum essential criteria.

Once candidates have been shortlisted, candidates will be asked to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or any information that would make them unsuitable to work with children, so that they have the opportunity to share relevant information and discuss it at interview stage. Candidates will be asked to sign a declaration confirming the information they have provided is true. The information we will ask for includes:

- If they have a criminal history
- Whether they are included on the barred list
- Whether they are prohibited from teaching
- applicable in England and Wales
- Any relevant overseas information

The Great Learners Trust has taken the decision to adopt the practice of online searches for candidates shortlisted for interview as part of our due diligence in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 (para 220). The online search is not a replacement or an alternative for other recruitment checks. These will continue to be conducted. Decisions about hiring will not be based solely on the personal information found in online searches. Candidates will always have the chance to address any issues of concern that come up during the search at interview. This will be made clear to candidates either in the job description, or in an email to them once we have received their application. Appendix 1 outlines the online search process in more detail and illustrates the scope of the searches made.

All candidates will be assessed equally against the same criteria without exception or variation and agreement reached by the short-listing panel about which applicants to invite for interview. The panel will record its decision about each application, in case of queries afterwards.

Seeking references and checking employment history

We will obtain references, where possible, before an interview and where an applicant has given prior permission. Any concerns raised will be explored further with referees and taken up with the candidate at an interview.

When seeking references, we will:

- Not accept open references
- Liaise directly with referees and verify any information contained within references with the referees

- Ensure at least one reference is from the candidate's current or most recent employer and completed by a senior person. Where the referee is school based, we will ask for the reference to be confirmed by the headteacher/principal as accurate in respect to disciplinary investigations
- Obtain verification of the candidate's most recent relevant period of employment if they are not currently employed
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the candidate worked with children if they are not currently working with children
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any inconsistencies with the candidate
- Resolve any concerns before any appointment is confirmed

Involving Pupils

Pupils may be involved in the recruitment and selection process. For example:

- Candidates for teaching posts might be asked to teach a lesson
- Short-listed candidates might be shown round the school and/or meet with pupils
- The Junior Leadership Team / School Council may interview candidates, supervised by a member of staff

Involving pupils does not mean that they sit on a final appointment interview panel, but their feedback will inform the decision of the appointment panel.

Interview

The interview will assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and explore their suitability to work with children. Every interview will be carried out face-to-face even if there is only one candidate.

Panel

The interview panel will consist of a minimum of two interviewers who will:

- Have the necessary authority to make decisions about appointments
- Be appropriately trained: one member of the interview panel will have undertaken Safer Recruitment training
- 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

Questions

The panel will agree a set of questions they will ask all candidates relating to the requirements of the post, and issues they will explore with each candidate based on the information provided on the application and reference (if available). In addition to assessing and evaluating the applicant's suitability for the particular post, when interviewing candidates, we will:

- Probe any gaps in employment, or where the candidate has changed employment or location frequently, and ask candidates to explain this
- Explore any potential areas of concern to determine the candidate's suitability to work with children
- Record all information considered and decisions made

Document Retention

All copies of any notes relating to the short-listing and interview decisions will be retained as per our record management policy. Should any candidate complain of unfair selection or discrimination these notes will be referred to.

7. Pre-appointment vetting checks

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the relevant school/ trust's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff

All offers of appointment will be conditional until satisfactory completion of the necessary pre-employment checks. When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced DBS certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will obtain the certificate before, or as soon as practicable after, the appointment, including when using the DBS update service. We will not keep a copy of the certificate for longer than 6 months, but when the copy is destroyed, we may still keep a record of the fact that vetting took place, the result of the check and recruitment decision taken
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK. These could include, where available:
 - For all staff, including teaching positions: [criminal records checks for overseas applicants](#)
 - For teaching positions: obtaining a letter from the professional regulating authority in the country where the applicant has worked, confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions on that person, and/or are aware of any reason why that person may be unsuitable to teach
- Check those candidates taking up a management position* are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state

* Management positions are most likely to include, but are not limited to, headteachers, principals and deputy/assistant headteachers.

Where required by the relevant legislation, we will also ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Existing staff

In certain circumstances we will carry out all the relevant checks on existing staff as if the individual was a new member of staff. These circumstances are when:

- There are concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children; or
- An individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is; or
- There has been a break in service of 12 weeks or more

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or
- We believe the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant (automatic barring either with or without the right to make representations) offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or
- We believe the 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and

- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

Where required by the relevant legislation: For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

Where required by the relevant legislation: In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment

Where required by the relevant legislation: Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Trustees, members and local governors

All trustees, local governors and members will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

The chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All proprietors, trustees, local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under [section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008](#)) – though section 128 checks are only required for local governors if they have retained or been delegated any management responsibilities
- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

Staff working in alternative provision settings

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

Adults who supervise pupils on work experience

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

Pupils staying with host families

Where the school plans for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

Appendix 1

Great Learners Trust – online search record

To carry out our duty of safeguarding and safer recruitment, the GLT has taken the decision to adopt the practice of online searches for candidates shortlisted for interview from 1 April 2023.

The online search is not a replacement or an alternative for other recruitment checks. These will continue to be conducted.

Decisions about hiring will not be based solely on the personal information found in online searches. Candidates will always be given the chance to comment on issues or incidents that arise from an online check.

We will conduct the same social media searches on every shortlisted candidate for a role in order to reduce our risk of being accused of bias and limit the amount of personal information we find. We do however recognise that we won't find the same amount of information on every candidate as different people will have different privacy settings and online presences.

To minimise any unconscious bias, we will ensure the person doing the searches does not have any involvement in conducting interviews or making decisions about recruitment. They will only share information that suggests the candidate:

- Is unqualified for the role
- Poses a potential safeguarding risk
- Risks damaging the reputation of your school or trust

The following form provides an online search record template and shows the scope and consistent approach to searches that will be made.

In some instances, schools may choose to outsource the process of conducting online checks to a specialised company.

RECRUITMENT ONLINE SEARCH RECORD

Candidate name:

Role shortlisted for:

Searcher name:

Date and time of online search:

SEARCH PARAMETERS	CONCERNS RAISED
<p>Google search: The following terms, looking at the first page of results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Candidate name'• 'Candidate name' + 'current school/employment'• 'Candidate name' + 'previous school/employment'• 'Candidate name' + 'educational institution'• 'Candidate name' + 'job title' <p>Websites: The candidate's name was typed into the search function of the following websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LinkedIn• Twitter (checked the top 10 results)• Facebook (checked the top 10 results)• Their current school's website	<p>Only record information that suggests the candidate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is unqualified for the role• Poses a potential safeguarding risk• Risks damaging the reputation of your school/trust• Don't include any irrelevant personal information.