



The Futures Trust

Safer Recruitment Policy

The Futures Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff to share this commitment

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Lead Reviewer: Victoria Hastie, Trust Operations Director
Approval: Finance, Resources, Audit and Risk Committee
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1. Policy statement

Safeguarding

All schools within The Futures Trust are required to implement robust and consistent safer recruitment and selection practices, to ensure that individuals who are not suitable to work with our learners are denied any opportunity to do so. Trustees and every Trust school share a commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and it is recognised that every individual is responsible for realising this commitment.

Each school's safer recruitment and selection practices are regularly reviewed by the Trust alongside the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, and any actions required are reported to the relevant Governing Body and the Trust. All staff involved in recruitment and selection processes are fully trained and resourced to fulfil their responsibilities.

Equality

Alongside our commitment to safeguarding we are committed to equality of opportunity, and value diversity and the different contributions that the people who become members of our staffing community are able to make. All staff will be selected on the basis of their knowledge, experience, skills, abilities and potential, and will be chosen because they will successfully and positively add value, raise standards and bring the Trust's values to life:

1. **Learners First** – young people, staff, leaders, governors and trustees totally focused upon the educational benefit of our pupils and students within a safe and supportive environment
2. **It's about learning** – young people, staff, leaders, governors and trustees totally focused upon developing and improving the learning of pupils and students underpinned by harmonious and trusting relationships
3. **No Barriers** – no excuses, only support to ensure young people, staff, leaders, governors and trustees maximise the academic achievement of pupils and students whilst enabling them to develop and flourish as well rounded individuals

Our safer recruitment and selection practices will be fair and implemented with due regard to the Equality Duty; they will contribute to our standing as an Employer of Choice, and to engaging a staffing community that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

2. Scope and purpose

This Policy solely concerns the recruitment and selection of employees and casual workers. For people wishing to apply to work with us it provides an overview of the safer recruitment and selection processes that they can expect. For staff with specific responsibilities in relation to safer recruitment and selection processes, it provides a reminder and overview of the key elements in the Trust's Safer Recruitment Checklist.

3. Links to other policies

The Trust has a separate Volunteer Policy which describes the safer recruitment and selection processes that apply to volunteers; however some aspects of this Policy will be relevant. The Trust also has a separate policy regarding the management of visitors including external agencies and contractors.

Other policies with links to this Policy include the Trust's / School's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Suitability Policy – employment of ex-offenders
- Policy on the secure handling of information provided by the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Reference Policy (providing and requesting)
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy

This Policy and the policies listed above are compliant with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, The Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice, The Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty.

4. The Trust's Safer Recruitment and Selection Practices

Safer Recruitment Checklist

The Trust's Safer Recruitment Checklist forms the basis for each recruitment and selection process. For each vacancy the nominated Senior Leader with Designated Responsibility in partnership with a colleague responsible for Human Resources, will implement each aspect of the checklist and ensure that all others involved in the process fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities.

In doing so they will utilise the documents and policies which underpin the checklist, and ensure that all appropriate steps are taken to deter, reject and prevent unsuitable individuals from being appointed to a role. Both colleagues will always be fully safer recruitment trained in accordance with the Trust's requirements; this includes having undertaken both online and face to face training and assessment.

The recruitment and selection process is managed in three stages:

- **Planning for the process**
- **Running the process**
- **Making a conditional offer of employment and pre-employment checks**

The following sets out relevant information for applicants regarding each stage of the process.

4.1 Planning for the recruitment and selection process

Timescales and resources

Planning is critical to running a safe and successful process. The timescales and resources required to run each part of the process are planned in advance and detailed on the checklist, with care taken to ensure that all safeguarding activities can be rigorously implemented. This includes planning who will be involved in the process and when, dates on which communications will be sent and activities will take place and how candidates will be assessed.

Before a role becomes a live vacancy the requirements of the school will be reviewed, in the context of the Trust, the Scheme of Delegation, the school and the school's resourcing plan. When a vacancy is identified the following parts of the process are prepared:

Job descriptions and person specifications

Where a vacancy is identified, the job description and person specification will be written or reviewed to ensure that they reflect the requirements of the role. For non-teaching roles, if necessary, a job evaluation will be carried out to determine the appropriate rate of pay.

A job description summarises the main duties and responsibilities of a role, whilst the person specification details the attributes needed to be able to successfully perform them. The five categories of attributes in the person specification are Education and Qualifications, Skills and Abilities, Experience, Knowledge and Understanding and Other Requirements. The specification will state whether the attributes are essential or desirable, and how it's intended the attributes will be measured during the selection process e.g application, interview, test, observation etc

Job descriptions and person specifications will always state the relevant duties, responsibilities and attributes in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Care will also be taken to ensure that attributes stated on the person specification are objective, do not inadvertently discriminate and enable potential applicants to assess whether they may be suitable for the role.

Advertising

Each school will determine where it wishes to advertise vacancies with due regard to equality of opportunity, managing and developing the talent within the existing staffing community and utilising advertising mediums efficiently and effectively with a view to attracting the best possible pool of applicants to select from.

All adverts will include a stated commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, will explain that the Trust does not accept Curriculum Vitae and that all successful applicants will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The actual salary range for the role, the number of working hours and weeks, the closing date for applications and key aspects of the person specification will also be stated.

Applicant information packs

Applicant information packs are made available on the relevant school website, the Trust website and by hard copy on request. The pack will always include:

- Information about the Trust, the school and the role
- Job description and person specification
- Application form
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Suitability Policy – employment of ex-offenders
- Safer Recruitment Policy

To ensure that the Trust's expectations of applicants are clear and that the required checks can be carried out, the Trust's application form sets out key information in relation to safeguarding and in particular notifies applicants of / requests the following:

- **Providing false information** - will result in the application being disqualified, withdrawal of any offer of employment, summary dismissal if you are in post and possible referral to the Police. Checks will be carried out to verify the content of your application form. CV's will not be accepted.
- **Full chronological history** - Please provide a full history in date order, most recent first, since leaving secondary education, including periods of any post-secondary education or training, part-time work and voluntary work as well as full time employment. Give start and end dates, reasons for leaving employment and explanations for periods not in employment, education or training.
- **Referees** - Please provide details of two people whom the Trust may obtain references from. The first referee will normally be your present or most recent Headteacher /Principal, or where not working in a school or academy the equivalent person. If you are not currently working with children please provide a referee from your most recent employment with children. Please note that you must provide referees from two different employers / organisations, unless you have not worked for or volunteered with more than one. Referees will be asked about disciplinary offences relating to children including those in respect of which a sanction is time expired, whether you have been the subject of any relevant child protection concerns and if so the outcome. References will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends. The Futures Trust reserves the right to request further or alternative referees from you in order to verify your suitability for employment.
- **Have you ever been subject to a child protection investigation by your employer or any other organisation?** If yes please state separately under confidential cover the circumstances and the outcome including any orders or conditions. This will not be opened unless you are invited to attend interview.

- **Compulsory declaration of any convictions, cautions, reprimands, warnings or bind-overs** If you are shortlisted you will be required to complete a 'Disclosure of Criminal Record' form and bring the completed form to interview. If the role is a relevant one involving contact with children up to age 8 you will also be required to make a Disqualification Declaration. The information you give will be treated as strictly confidential. A disclosure will not automatically disqualify you from consideration. Any offence will only be taken into consideration if it is one which would make you unsuitable for the type of work you are applying for. However, offences relating to children may make you unsuitable since this is a 'regulated position' under the Under the Criminal Justice & Courts Services Act 2000. Please refer to the Trust's Policy on the Employment of ex-offenders, available with the application pack for this role.
- **Please note** - Under the Criminal Justice & Courts Services Act 2000 it is an offence for an individual who has been disqualified from working with children to knowingly apply for, offer to do, accept, or do any work in a 'regulated position'.

Candidates recommended for appointment will be required to provide a satisfactory enhanced DBS certificate, to complete a pre-employment medical questionnaire and may be required to undergo a medical examination.

- **Applicant declaration** - I certify that to the best of my knowledge the information I have given on this form is true and complete. I understand and accept that if I have failed to disclose or given false information then it will disqualify my application, result in the withdrawal of any offer of employment, or in summary dismissal if I am in post and possible referral to the Police. I understand and accept the notes above and that the information I have provided may be subject to checking.

It is critical that applicants read and understand the application form, and complete the form in full complying with the stated requests for information. Failure to do so may result in an application being disqualified.

The application requests that applicants provide a letter in support of their application, which clearly demonstrates how they meet the criteria on the person specification for the role. Applicants are also advised that they may use evidence of their experience, knowledge, skills and abilities gained through paid, unpaid or voluntary work, or related to interests that they have, in order to demonstrate how they meet the criteria.

4.2 Running the next stages in the recruitment and selection process

Shortlisting applications

Once a vacancy has been advertised and applications received shortlisting packs are prepared and distributed to the people with responsibility for shortlisting and interviewing. A minimum of two people must be on the shortlisting and interview panel, one of which will always be the Senior Leader with Designated Responsibility.

The Trust's application form is split into three parts:

Part 1: Information for shortlisting and interviewing

Part 2: Personal details

Part 3: Confidential equality and diversity monitoring form

Parts 2 and 3 of the form are separated from Part 1, and only part one is given to the shortlisting and interview panel, along with a shortlisting matrix and a form to log any gaps and inconsistencies identified in applications. If the applicant identifies in Part 2 of their application that they are personally known to any member of the panel, the panel may be subject to change to avoid any conflict of interest and ensure equality of opportunity.

Part 1 of the application does not request any personal or characteristic information from applicants to assist in freeing the shortlisting process from any conscious or unconscious bias. The shortlisting matrix sets out all of the essential criteria listed in the person specification which are to be assessed using the application form. Those shortlisting must indicate whether or not the applicant has provided evidence in their application that they meet each of the relevant criteria. At this stage applications are thoroughly scrutinised for any gaps and inconsistencies, and the suitability of the referees provided by shortlisted applicants is considered, so that alternative referees can be sought where necessary.

Unless otherwise stated in the applicant information pack, applicants who have not been shortlisted will not be contacted by the Trust, but feedback will be provided on request.

Invite to interview and assessment

Where an applicant has provided an email address the invitation to attend interview will be sent by email, and where an applicant has indicated that they are not able to access email a letter will be sent. Interview invites will always contain the following:

- Date, time/s and venue for interview and assessment
- Directions to the venue
- The names and positions of panel members / assessors
- An outline of what to expect and details of any preparatory work that may need to be undertaken
- A request that a named person is notified within a specified timescale if the candidate requires any reasonable adjustments to be made, to enable them to attend and fully participate in the interview and assessment process
- A Disclosure of Criminal Record Form, to be completed, sealed in an envelope marked private and confidential and brought to interview
- A request that the following documents are brought to interview
 - Original copies of qualifications declared as part of the application
 - Two of the following: Birth Certificate, valid Passport or Driving Licence; and
 - A recent utilities bill or other form of verification of current address

References

References are requested using Trust reference pro forma, and are thoroughly scrutinised in accordance with the Trust's Reference Policy. Where timescales allow references will always be requested prior to interview to enable any areas of concern to be explored. The job description and person specification for the role are sent with the reference request, and referees informed that the Trust and its schools are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Trust will never accept an open reference i.e addressed 'whom it may concern', and the teaching and non-teaching pro forma include the following questions:

This post is in “regulated activity” and is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions Order 1975). Therefore it is essential that you let us know if, for any reason, you have concerns about the employment of this person in a school setting where they will come into contact with children. Do you have any concerns?

No **Yes** (if yes please enclose details separately under confidential cover)

Are there any disciplinary procedures, allegations or concerns which the applicant has been the subject of, involving issues related to safety and welfare of children or young people, including any where the disciplinary sanction may have expired.

No **Yes** (if yes please enclose details separately under confidential cover. Cases in which an allegation was proven to be unsubstantiated, unfounded false or malicious should not be included).

Referees are required to sign a declaration to confirm that they understand that:

- They have a responsibility to ensure that the reference is accurate, that it does not contain any misstatement and that nothing significant is omitted.
- The content of the reference may be discussed with the applicant.
- The applicant may request and be granted access to the reference.

Online Searches

Online searches will be carried out on shortlisted candidates as part of the safer recruitment due diligence process, in accordance with the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Successful candidates will be notified that they will be subject to an online check and that anything of concern will be discussed with them following interview.

An online check will consist of a search on the candidate's name, location and current employer, and may include social media platforms, including but not limited to, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn.]

The online checks *will not be carried out by the interview panel. Members of the HR team or an outside agency will undertake these checks.*

If incidents or issues that are publicly available online in relation to the shortlisted candidate are identified, this may be explored with the applicant post interview. Information relating to

the online checks will only be passed to the interview panel if the searches yield information that needs to be explored further with the candidate as a follow up to the interview.

Interview

At interview photocopies of identity and qualification documents will be taken and the completed Disclosure of Criminal Record form examined. Any disclosures stated on the form will be managed and discussed with the candidate in accordance with the Trust's Suitability Policy. Following interview the photocopies of documents belonging to the successful candidate/s will be retained; all other copies will be immediately and securely destroyed.

The interview will assess the candidates against the criteria stated on the person specification, and relevant questions will be asked in relation to safeguarding in order to assess candidate's suitability to work with children and young people. This will include seeking explanations in respect of any gaps or inconsistencies identified during the shortlisting process, and where all references have been received prior to interview, discussing any matters arising. Candidates can expect the interview process to be fair and consistent. The same question framework will be used for each candidate and notes will be taken of the responses provided. At every interview candidates will have the opportunity to ask questions of the interview panel.

Assessment

Any assessment activities will be relevant to the requirements of the role and candidates will be informed of what to expect when they are invited to attend. Whenever possible, activities will include elements directly relevant to assessing suitability to work with children and young people.

Application forms, interview notes and assessment outcomes for candidates who are not appointed will be retained on file for a period of six months and then securely destroyed.

4.3 Conditional offers of employment / engagement and pre-employment checks

The checks that will be undertaken

All offers of employment / engagement are conditional and are subject to:

- Verification of identity using photo ID and proof of address
- Verification of right to work in the UK
- Overseas checks where required

As a minimum overseas checks will be undertaken in respect of any person that has been in a country outside of the UK for a period of 3 months or more during the last five years, and additional checks required at the Trust's discretion.

- Verification of mental and physical fitness to carry out the role

This is ascertained via the completion of a confidential Occupational Health questionnaire, and where required a medical examination carried out by the Trust's Occupational Health provider.

- The receipt of at least two references which are satisfactory to the Trust.

The Trust reserves the right to request further or alternative references from applicants in order to verify their suitability for employment.

- Verification of qualifications including Qualified Teacher Status and completion of statutory induction where required
- Barred List and Enhanced DBS Clearance

Once received by the applicant, the original DBS certificate must be shown to one of the designated persons at the relevant school. In the event that a DBS certificate contains information, this will be managed in accordance with the Trust's Suitability Policy and Policy on the secure handling of information provided by the DBS, and a positive DBS risk assessment carried out using the Trust's pro forma.

Where required for the role:

- A disqualification check
- A prohibition from teaching check including EEA sanctions
- A Section 128 check

For non-teaching roles

- Successful completion of a probationary period

Any failure to meet the conditions specified will result in an offer of employment /engagement being withdrawn.

If any candidate is found to be prohibited or disqualified from working with children and young people, to have provided false information or where serious concerns arise, the Trust will comply with its obligations to report these matters to the Police and DBS as required.

Information regarding pre-employment checks will be recorded on the relevant school's Single Central Record, and copies of documents retained on the individual's personnel file in accordance with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and as stated in the Trust's Policy on the secure handling of information provided by the DBS and Data Protection Policy.

Delays in obtaining Criminal Record Disclosure or Overseas Checks

In wholly exceptional circumstances as determined by the Headteacher, a prospective employee or worker may be allowed to commence work prior to satisfactory Criminal Record Disclosure having been received and/or where relevant overseas checks.

No prospective employee or worker will be allowed to commence work before **ALL** other pre-employment checks have been completed, and where it is identified that a prospective employee or worker will commence work prior to the above:

- A risk assessment must be undertaken using the Trust's Risk Assessment - Commencement of work pending receipt of Criminal Record Disclosure form. The form must be fully completed and signed by HR, the Headteacher and responsible line manager; and
- The prospective employee or worker must be appropriately supervised at all times.

4.4 Induction and probation

On-going vigilance and training is critical to establishing a robust safeguarding culture. There is an induction programme for all teaching and non-teaching staff appointed to the Trust regardless of previous experience, which includes online and face to face child protection training and assessment. The purpose of induction is to:

- Provide training and information about the Trust's / school's policies and procedures including those in relation to the safeguarding of children and young people
- Establish clear expectations regarding the standards of conduct, behaviour and performance required
- Ensure staff know when and how to raise any safeguarding concerns
- Facilitate the identification of any concerns regarding conduct, behaviour or performance, and enable support to be provided to achieve the standards required
- Provide opportunities for staff to discuss any issues or concerns they may have regarding their role or responsibilities